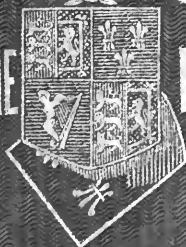


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LIFE OF THE



DUKE OF


MARLBOROUGH.



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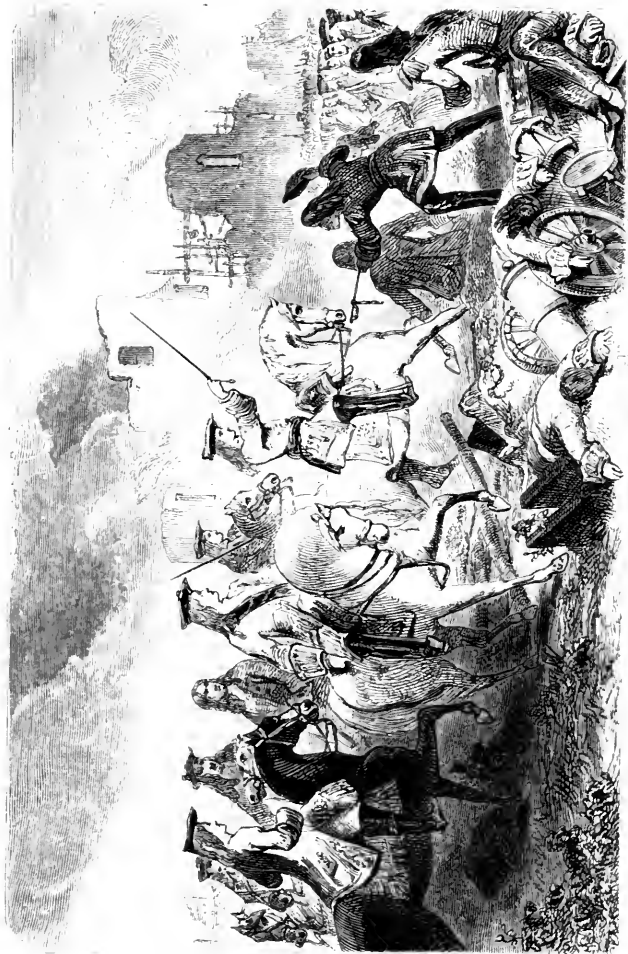
A L I F E

OF

J O H N C H U R C H I L L,

DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.







BLENHHEIM

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A

LIFE OF MARLBOROUGH.

IN FOUR BOOKS.

BY

CHARLES MAC FARLANE,

AUTHOR OF "A LIFE OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON,"
"HISTORY OF INDIA," ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE humble object proposed in this little volume (as in its predecessor) is to place in the hands of, or render accessible to, all classes of the community, a *cheap* and compendious account of the doings and sayings of one of the greatest of English warriors and statesmen;—to present a convenient manual or pocket-companion, in which no important fact should be omitted, and in which the dryness and frequent abruptness of mere abridgment should be avoided.

The busy have not time (and in this over-worked generation who is not busy?) for the perusal of voluminous works on one subject, the young are deterred by the bulk, and the less opulent classes by the cost, of such books. Yet the great facts in the lives of men like Wellington and Marlborough ought to be familiar to every Englishman. An earnest desire for peace does not always carry with it the attainment and security of that blessing. The continent of Europe is turned into a camp. The unsettled, critical times in which we live, seem to call for an ani-

mated revival of the memory of our old military prowess, and of the science, skill, valour, and achievements of our forefathers, as well on the battle-field as on the ocean.

I claim no new discovery or original research. The staple materials exist in Archdeacon Coxe's "Memoirs of Marlborough" (three vols. in quarto), and in the Duke's "Letters and Despatches," edited by the late General Sir George Murray (in five thick octavo volumes). But having twice gone over the subject of Marlborough's campaigns (the second time with some altered views, and a great increase of admiration), I have compared the various authorities quoted by Archdeacon Coxe, with his own valuable text, and have consulted the manuscript journal of the duke's chaplain, Dr. Hare, the authenticity and importance of which will be seen in this volume.

C. M. F.

London, March 10, 1852.

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A L I F E
OF
JOHN CHURCHILL,
DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

BOOK I.

ASHE, a small place in the beautiful county of Devon—a county so productive of British worthies, and especially of heroes both military and naval—was the birthplace of the illustrious subject of this volume.

He was born on the 24th of June 1650, in the early part of the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell.

He was the second son of Winston Churchill by Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Drake of Ashe. A recent writer states that Elizabeth Drake claimed a connection with the descendants of Sir Francis Drake, the great navigator and naval hero of Queen Elizabeth's time; but no authority is given for the statement, and we have not been able to find any ourselves. The name of Drake is very common in the county.* The genealogical table of the Churchills, exhibited a descent from the time of the Norman conquest; but the family had fallen into comparative poverty and obscurity.

* Had there been any such connection, it would scarcely have escaped the notice of the industrious Archdeacon Coxe, a careful and good genealogist.

During the contest between Charles I. and the Parliament, both the father and the grandfather of our hero had sided with the king, and on the fall of the monarchy had both been heavily fined. Winston, his father, had served in the royal army, and had signalized himself in battles and sieges; but his highest military rank had been that of a captain of horse. The fine imposed upon Winston was enormous (for his means), his estate was sequestrated, and the parliamentary commissioners left him bare of everything. But during the troubles he had married the daughter of Sir John Drake, who was allied to the noble families of Villiers, Boteler, and Leigh, and before the execution of the king, he sought a refuge in the mansion of his father-in-law; and it was under this roof at Ashe, that most of his children were born.*

Our great soldier and statesman came into the world in circumstances of poverty and family dependence; but ten years after his birth occurred the Restoration, and then Charles II. rewarded the loyalty of Winston Churchill. "He recovered possession of his family estate at Mintern, and was gratified with the special grant of an augmentation to his arms, which conveys an honourable testimony to his loyalty and military services. In the first parliament of Charles II. he served for the borough of Weymouth. Soon afterwards he received the honour of knighthood, and was appointed a commissioner of claims in Ireland, for judging the qualifications of those who had forfeited their estates. He is praised by the Irish historians for the share he took in tranquillizing that country, then in a state of commotion.*

On his return from Ireland, Sir Winston was nominated one of the clerks-comptrollers of the Board of Green Cloth, an office which, with a brief interval of suspension caused by an outcry in the House of Commons, he retained till his death in March 1688.

* Archdeacon Coxe's *Memoirs of John, Duke of Marlborough*, &c.

The father of our great soldier had some pretensions to science and literature; he was one of the first members of the Royal Society, and he published a political history of England under the title of "*Divi Britannici*."

Such school education as his son John received—and it was but little—was given in St. Paul's school, London.* While yet a boy, he was appointed page of honour to the king's brother, the Duke of York, subsequently James II. The duke was very assiduous in reviewing and exercising his two regiments of foot-guards, and on these occasions young John Churchill was constantly in attendance. One day the duke asked him what he would like to be, and how he could provide for him. The page fell on his knee and said, "Give me a pair of colours in one of these fine regiments. I will be a soldier!" The colours were given, and he commenced his military career as an ensign in the foot-guards.

Not long after this, we find John Churchill actively engaged at Tangier, which Charles II. had obtained from Portugal, as part of the dowry of his wife, Catherine of Braganza, and which was at this time besieged by the Moors. Here Churchill, who never owed much to reading or in-door study, must have learned something of the art and practice of war: he was engaged in frequent sorties and skirmishes, and gave proof of that coolness and intrepidity which afterwards contributed to raise him so high in the lists of fame. His stay in Africa was, however, short.

In 1672, when England united with France against Holland, he accompanied the 6,000 British troops who were sent to the continent under the command of the Duke of Monmouth. The cause in which Charles II. had engaged himself was a bad one, and the motives which had impelled him were still worse; but the service was well suited to instruct and improve young Captain Churchill; and on this old battle-field of the Netherlands, and chiefly from French officers,

* Appendix to the Life of Dr. Colet, Dean of St. Paul's.

he acquired much of the skill which enabled him at a later period to beat the French. The army of Louis XIV. was directed by the two greatest generals of the age, Marshal Turenne and the Prince of Condé. In his first campaign with them, these great commanders proceeded with a degree of skill and of rapidity which had scarcely been witnessed in modern warfare, except in the case of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. Captain Churchill was foremost on every occasion of difficulty and danger. At the siege of Nimeguen he particularly attracted the attention of Marshal Turenne, who from that time forward always called him his handsome Englishman.

A lieutenant-colonel having disgracefully abandoned a station which he was ordered to defend to the last extremity, Turenne exclaimed, "I will bet a supper and a dozen of claret that my handsome Englishman will recover the post with half the number of men that the officer commanded who has lost it." The wager was accepted, and Churchill fully justified the confidence of his general.*

In the following year, he equally distinguished himself at the siege of Maestricht, where he was slightly wounded, and where he saved the life of the Duke of Monmouth. For his exploits he received the thanks of Louis XIV. at the head of the army.

Though Charles II. soon grew weary of a war which disgusted the parliament, and irritated the religious feelings of the nation, yet he left an English corps to serve with the French. On the 3rd of April 1674, Churchill was appointed by Louis XIV. colonel of the English regiment, which was vacant by the resignation of the first Lord Peterborough. In this rank he fought under Turenne at the great battle of Sinzheim. There is little doubt also that after the death of his patron Turenne, he took part in some of the operations between 1675 and 1677. The justice of the cause for which he fought will not bear investigation,

* *Lives of Marlborough and Prince Eugene.*

but the practical military school in which he served was the very best in Europe: the question of right or wrong, or the political question at issue, did not often embarrass any of the soldiers of these times, and Churchill, to his honour, did all he could to diminish the woes of war, always being as generous to his enemies as he was faithful to his friends. This conduct was remembered in after years, when he was generalissimo, and the most renowned warrior in Europe. In the years 1711 the widow of his old adversary St. Just, wrote to him:—"It is difficult to forget a noble gentleman like you; and I have considered it as an indispensable duty to bear constantly in remembrance all the kindness you shewed me at Metz, *thirty-four years ago*. You were very young then, my lord, but then you gave by your excellent qualities, the hope of a valour, of a politeness, and of a conduct, which have since, with justice, placed you in a rank to command all men."*

Early in the year 1678, Colonel Churchill married Miss Sarah Jennings, daughter of Richard Jennings, Esq., of Sandridge, near St. Albans, a gentleman of an ancient family, which had been distinguished by its devotion to the royal cause. Sarah Jennings, as well as her eldest sister Frances, had been brought up in the court of the Duchess of York, and had been from childhood the constant companion and playmate of the duchess's second daughter, the Princess (afterwards queen) Anne. The family of Jennings was a family of beauties: the countenance of Sarah was animated as well as beautiful, her figure was commanding, and, unlike most celebrated beauties, her intellect also was strong and commanding. In a licentious court she had maintained a pure reputation. Though only eighteen years at the time of her marriage, she was as much admired for her prudence and strength of character as for the charms of her person and the liveliness of her conversation. She brought to her husband (for the present)

* Part of a letter, as quoted by Archdeacon Coxe.

but a very small accession of fortune, and as Churchill was as yet poor, the first years of their union were passed in straitened circumstances. Even thus early the lady could display a good deal of that vivacity and petulance, of that haughtiness and self-willedness, which afterwards contributed to make her and her illustrious husband so many and such bitter enemies. But if she, in the end, caused the downfall of the Duke of Marlborough, John Churchill would never have risen to that height but for his union with her. Moreover, she was at all times a faithful, loving wife, more anxious for the reputation and glory of her lord than he himself was; and to him she never ceased to be what he had called her in the days of his first enamourment, his "soul's soul." The great warrior was often ridiculed for his uxoriousness; but the mind of Sarah Jennings, which could exercise such influence over a mind like *his*, must have been an extraordinary one, and the charms of her manners and person resisted the attacks of time to a degree that was marvellous. We have an account of the lady from the affected but lively pen of Colley Cibber, who saw her at Nottingham at the time of the Revolution in 1688, when she was accompanying the Princess Anne on her flight from the palace of St. James's, to join her husband and William, Prince of Orange. The fugitives had entered Nottingham in the greatest hurry and confusion, late in the afternoon :—

"The same night," says Cibber, "all the noblemen, and the other persons of distinction then in arms, had the honour to sup at her royal highness's table, which was then furnished (as all her necessary accommodations were) by the care and at the charge of the Lord Devonshire. At this entertainment, of which I was a spectator, something very particular surprised me. The noble guests at the table happening to be more in number than attendants out of liveries could be found for, I, being well known in the Lord Devonshire's family, was desired by his lordship's

maitre d'hotel to assist at it. The post assigned me was to observe what the Lady Churchill might call for. Being so near the table, you may naturally ask me, what I might have heard to have passed in conversation at it? which I should certainly tell you had I attended to above two words that were uttered there, and these were, "some wine and water." These, I remember, came distinguished and observed to my ear, because they came from the fair guest, whom I took such pleasure to wait on: except at that single sound, all my senses were collected into my eyes, which during the whole entertainment wanted no better amusement than of stealing now and then the delight of gazing on the fair object so near me. If so clear an emanation of beauty, such a commanding grace of aspect, struck me into a regard that had something softer than the most profound respect in it, I cannot see why I may not, without offence, remember it; since beauty, like the sun, must sometimes lose its power to choose, and shine into equal warmth, the peasant and the courtier. Now, to give you, sir, a farther proof of how good a taste my first hopeful entrance into manhood set out with, I remember, above twenty years after, when the same lady had given the world four of the loveliest daughters that ever were gazed on, even after they were all nobly married, and were become the reigning toasts of every party of pleasure, their still lovely mother had at the same time her votaries, and her health very often took the lead in those involuntary triumphs of beauty. However presumptuous or impertinent these thoughts might have appeared at my first entertaining them, why may I not hope that my having kept them decently secret for full fifty years, may be now a good round plea for their pardon? Were I now qualified to say more of this celebrated lady, I should conclude it thus; that she has lived (to all appearance) a peculiar favourite of Providence; that few examples can parallel the profusion of blessings which have attended so long a life of felicity. A person so attractive! a husband so memorably

great! an offspring so beautiful! a fortune so immense! and a title, which (when royal favour had no higher to bestow) she only could receive from the Author of Nature! a great-grandmother without grey hairs! These are such consummate indulgences, that we might think Heaven has centred them all in one person, to let us see how far, with a lively understanding, the full possession of them could contribute to human happiness." *

This is a rare picture; and, in the main, it may be taken as strictly true. In the course of this condensed memoir will be seen what influence the fair and commanding Churchill exercised upon all who came within her sphere of attraction, and how frequently and how much her husband stood indebted to this influence.

From the time of his marriage, in 1678, till 1683, Colonel Churchill had no settled home, and was obliged to submit to frequent separations from his wife, in order to attend the movements of the Duke of York, or to go on missions for that prince. On one occasion he was despatched to the Low Countries as a diplomatist, and on another he was appointed to the command of part of a British armament, which was to act, not *against*, but *for* Holland. But Charles II. for ever vacillating, and true to no line of foreign policy, could not be trusted by the Dutch; and, before Marlborough could arrive on the continent, the Prince of Orange signed a treaty with Louis XIV.

When, on account of his religion, his patron the Duke of York was compelled to quit England, Brigadier Churchill attended him to the Hague and Brussels; and when the duke was summoned by a secret order from his brother the king (then dangerously ill at Windsor), to return to England, the brigadier still accompanied him. During the short interval of this visit, he was despatched to Paris to accelerate a treaty between Charles and Louis. The employing of so young a man in such serious business is a proof of the high

* An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber, &c.

estimation put upon Marlborough's abilities. It was his fortune to learn diplomacy, as well as war, in the best schools, and by practice and actual service. Thus it was that he became so perfect in both. After many other missions of a diplomatic or most confidential nature, we find him settled with the Duke of York in Scotland, where, for a time, he enjoyed the society of his beloved wife. In 1682, when Charles subdued the enemies of his brother—who would have excluded the duke from the succession to the throne—Churchill returned to court with his royal highness, and was soon afterwards elevated to the Scotch peerage, under the title of Baron Churchill of Aymouth. He had a very narrow escape from being drowned at sea: the *Gloucester* yacht was wrecked in Yarmouth roads; many persons of rank perished with her; and he was one amongst the fortunate few who escaped, being invited by the Duke of York to take his place in the long boat as it was putting off for shore.

From the marriage of the Princess Anne with Prince George of Denmark, till the death of Charles II. in February 1685, Lord Churchill's name scarcely appears in public affairs. The accession of James II. by whom he had been so long favoured, brought him at once into conspicuous employment. He was sent as minister extraordinary to Paris, to announce to Louis XIV. the accession of James, and to thank the French monarch for the largesses he had just sent to the English king. In this sort of diplomacy, the strict rules of right and wrong were as little prevalent as they had been in the war against Holland; but still it was a field of practice and improvement, by which he greatly benefited.

On the 14th of May 1685, only twenty-one days after the coronation of James, Lord Churchill was raised to the English peerage by the title of Baron Churchill, of Sandridge, in the county of Herts.

During the invasion by the Duke of Monmouth, who was claiming the crown as the legitimate son of Charles II.

Churchill rendered the most important services to his royal master; and it was chiefly through his skill and vigilance that the decisive battle of Sedgemoor did not end in a surprisal and a defeat, instead of terminating in a victory. In that affair he appears to have been the only officer in the field that really knew the business of war. After the suppression of the rebellion, other military promotions and honours were conferred upon him by James II. But his mind soon misgave him as to the intentions of that misguided and most obstinate prince; and so soon as he saw that James was bent upon forcing the Romish religion upon the country, and—as a means of so doing—was determined to suppress parliamentary and all other liberty, his affection and gratitude gave way before his religious conscience and his patriotic principles. By actions as by words he had proved himself a steady and determined member of the Anglican church. He had been a friend to toleration, he had been willing to make concessions to the papists; he had been the enemy of those who would have excluded James from the throne upon the *suspitions* of his being an intolerant Romanist and a man of tyrannical disposition; but when the hapless king, by his own overt acts, converted these suspicions into absolute certainties, Churchill made up his mind to abandon him, and to stand up for his creed and his country at the very earliest opportunity. This, in a few words, is the explanation of his conduct, and what has been called his black, base ingratitude to his royal benefactor. During his late embassy in Paris, he had earnestly said to Lord Galway, “If the king should attempt to change our religion and constitution, *I will instantly quit his service.*”*

The attempt was made by James without any disguise; and thereupon Lord Churchill abandoned the infatuated king, being one of the very first to make overtures to the Prince of Orange, with whom he was personally and well acquainted. At the same time, he assured that prince that

* Bishop Burnet: from the information of Lord Galway himself.

the Princess Anne would rather forsake her misguided father than sacrifice her religion, a resolution to which the princess had certainly been brought, mainly, by her favourite and bosom friend, Lady Churchill. Yet, after taking this step, he warned the king of the dangerous course he was running, and endeavoured to divert him from it; nor was it until all hope was passed, that he gave his full adhesion to William of Orange, not with the intention that *he* should be king, but merely with the hope that he would fulfil his declaration of restraining the arbitrary spirit of James, of securing the national religion, and restoring the parliament to its long suspended functions and authority.*

Withdrawing from the army of James, Churchill hurried towards the west, and joining the Prince of Orange at Axminster, was received with every mark of distinction and personal regard. His departure was a signal for a general defection. The Duke of Grafton, the Duke of Ormond, many other noblemen, and a whole host of gentlemen, followed Churchill. Prince George of Denmark, the husband of James's daughter Anne, quitted the king's camp, and repaired to that of the Prince of Orange, who had advanced as far as Sherborne. At nearly the same time, the Princess Anne herself withdrew from the palace secretly, at the midnight hour, in a common hackney-coach, in company with Lady Churchill, Mrs. Berkeley, the Bishop of London, and the Duke of Dorset. It was on learning this evasion, that James uttered the well-known words, "God help me! my very children have forsaken me."

Not only by her own shewing, but upon other authority and the universal report of the time, we may believe, that but for Lady Churchill's energy of character, the princess

* Archdeacon Coxe's *Memoirs of John Duke of Marlborough*. Bishop Burnet's *History of his Own Time*. An Account of the Conduct of the Dowager-Duchess of Marlborough, from her first coming to Court to the year 1710, in a Letter from herself to my Lord ——. —London, 1742. Southey, in *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxiii.

would not have taken this decisive step in the manner she did. The party remained one night at the bishop's house in the city of London. Thence they proceeded to the Duke of Dorset's seat of Copt Hall, and thence to Nottingham, where Lord Devonshire and other personages were expecting her. "We had not been long at Nottingham," says Colley Cibber, "before we heard that the Prince of Denmark, with some other great persons, were gone off from the king to the Prince of Orange, and that the Princess Anne, fearing the king her father's resentment might fall upon her for her consort's revolt, had withdrawn herself in the night from London, and was then within a day's journey of Nottingham ; on which very morning we were suddenly alarmed with the news, that two thousand of the king's dragoons were in close pursuit to bring her back prisoner ; but this alarm, it seems, was all stratagem, and was but a part of that general terror which was thrown into many other places about the kingdom, at the same time, with design to animate and unite the people in the common defence ; it being then also given out that the Irish were everywhere at our heels, to cut off all the Protestants within the reach of their fury. In this alarm our troops scrambled to arms in as much order as their consternation would admit of, and having advanced some few miles on the London road, they met the princess in a coach, then attended only by the Lady Churchill and the Lady Fitzharding, whom they conducted into Nottingham through the acclamations of the people." *

From Nottingham Anne and her favourite hastened to join the Prince of Denmark, who was now at Oxford. They were escorted by a corps of mounted volunteers, and Compton, the Bishop of London, who had been a soldier in his youth, and who had put on his harness again, rode before the coach with a drawn sword in his hand, and pistols at his saddle-bow.

After the flight of James, Lord Churchill was sent forward

* An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber, &c.

to re-assemble his own body of horse-guards, and to bring over the other soldiers who were quartered in and about London. In this, his success was immediate; for he was the darling of the army.

In the convention of parliament he was one of the peers who associated in support of the Prince of Orange's declaration, and in defence of his person; but when the design was disclosed of placing the prince on the throne, either alone, or in conjunction with his consort Mary, elder sister of the Princess Anne, Churchill was among the peers who voted for a regency. "In such times," says Southey, "the wisest statesman can rely little upon his own foresight, and must sometimes alter his course, as the physician is compelled by the symptoms which he discovers to-day, to depart from the plan of treatment which he had yesterday prescribed."

When the conflict of parties became so violent as to portend a counter-revolution, and when there appeared no alternative but to recall James or place William on the throne, his lordship, from motives of delicacy, absented himself from the house of peers.

"I do solemnly protest," says Marlborough's wife, speaking of William's accession, "that I was so very simple a creature that I never once dreamed of his being king. I imagined that the Prince of Orange's sole design was to provide for the safety of his own country, by obliging king James to keep the laws of ours, and that he would go back as soon as he had made us all happy; that there was no sort of difficulty in the execution of this design; and that to do so much good would be a greater pleasure to him than to be king of any country upon earth." In saying this, the duchess had no intention of offering any apology for herself, still less for her husband. Want of sincerity was not among her faults, for she was of a frank and honourable nature, and as it is certain that Marlborough reposed in her the most entire confidence, and even, on great political occasions,

sometimes submitted his own better judgment to hers, it may fairly be presumed from this passage, that his views in inviting William went no farther than are there stated.

The convention parliament soon passed the memorable vote, declaring that James, by his flight, &c. had vacated the throne. Hereupon, Lord Churchill resumed his seat, and took an active part in the subsequent arrangements. It was he and his all-prevailing lady who persuaded the Princess Anne to postpone her own succession, and to consent that the Prince and Princess of Orange should occupy the throne. Thus was removed one great obstacle to the settlement of the government and nation.

On the 14th of February 1689, Lord Churchill was sworn a member of the Privy Council, and made a lord of the new king's bedchamber; and two days before the coronation of William and Mary, he was raised to the dignity of Earl of Marlborough.

For some time after the Revolution, Marlborough took little share in public business, except in the settlement of a permanent and independent revenue on the Princess Anne. To this measure both William and his queen were violently opposed: indecorous quarrels took place at court between the two royal sisters; Marlborough and his lady fell visibly out of favour with the king and queen, but became all the more endeared to Anne. The contest ended by parliament settling an annual allowance of 50,000*l.* on the princess.

Though dissatisfied with Marlborough's conduct, William found it expedient to intrust him with the command of the British forces now acting against the French in the Netherlands; and on the 27th of May 1689, the pupil of Turenne landed at Rotterdam. The troops, at whose head he placed himself, were not veteran soldiers, but ill-disciplined, disorderly, defective in zeal, and also in health; but with these troops, in one battle—the battle of Walcourt—he defeated the Marshal d'Humières, and entirely disconcerted the plan of his campaign. The Prince of Waldeck, the commander-

in-chief of the allied armies, declared that Marlborough had manifested greater military talents in this single battle than generals of far longer experience had shewn in many campaigns.

So long as his old master, King James, kept the field in Ireland, Marlborough declined serving in that country; but after William's victory at the Boyne, and the second flight of James to France, he volunteered his services to reduce Cork and Kinsale for King William, whose return to England had become an urgent necessity. With 5,000 men the earl embarked at Portsmouth for the scene of action; and he landed near Cork on the 21st of September 1692. William's Dutch and German generals had been dozing away their time; but, in the short space of thirty-seven days, Marlborough reduced Cork and Kinsale, interrupted the communication of the insurgents with France, and confined them to the exhausted, hungry province of Ulster. He then returned with his prisoners to England. The king was cordial in his welcome. "I know no man," said William, "who has served so few campaigns, so fit as you are to command." The English nation was exultant: long accustomed to see our armies confided to foreigners, it rejoiced to find that an English officer had gained more advantages in a single month than many of the foreign generals in several campaigns.*

After a very short stay at court the earl returned to Ireland, where he remained till the close of the year, tranquillizing the country, conciliating the affections of the inhabitants by his moderation, and with the rigid discipline he established in the army. His great secret for bringing soldiers into orderly and good conduct, was to see that they were paid and properly fed. Hunger is always mutinous; when soldiers are half-starved they plunder, and plunder leads to other excesses, and to crimes which they never contemplated. It appears to have been at this period that

* Archdeacon Coxe.

he first paid that attention to the commissariat department, which afterwards enabled him to do so much with his English armies.

In May, the following year, the earl accompanied the king to the continent; and was employed in assembling the troops for the ensuing campaign, and in hastening other preparations. He now for the first time experienced that doggedness and jealous opposition on the part of the States-General and their officers, which at a later period often embittered his life, and sometimes defeated his best conceived and most important plans of war. In this campaign he would have secured Mons, the barrier of Flanders; but his advice was rejected, and Mons was taken by the French. But if the young general was envied and thwarted, there were yet in the allied camp high-born and liberal-minded men, who confidently predicted his future celebrity. The Prince of Vaudemont said to William, "Of your English generals, Kirke has fire, Laneir thought, Mackay skill, and Colchester bravery; but there is something inexpressible in the Earl of Marlborough, all their virtues seem to be united in his single person. I have lost my skill in physiognomy, if any subject of your Majesty can ever attain such a height of military glory, as that to which this combination of noble qualities must raise him."*

And all the while Marlborough was the most unobtrusive, quiet, modest man in the whole army, entertaining a mortal aversion to all swagger, fanfaronade, and display. He performed the most skilful and difficult movements, without thinking that he was doing anything more than might be done by any other officer; and he stood unflinching under the hottest fire, as if it were mere matter of routine and business. Ever warm in the praise of his officers and men, he was indifferent to the camp eulogiums.

* *Lives of Marlborough and Eugene.* The writer assures us that he received the anecdote from Pensionary Heinsius, and that the pensionary heard the words spoken by the Prince of Vaudemont.

His success excited jealousies at home, and his dislike to William's Dutch favourites, his wife's petulance, and, occasionally, his own reported expressions, made him many enemies. He was accustomed to call Bentinck, the first Dutch Earl of Portland, "*un homme de bois*," a wooden fellow. Portland had the ear of the king, and when the Princess Anne and her Danish husband earnestly solicited the Order of the Garter for Marlborough, it was peremptorily refused by William. Fresh quarrels ensued between the queen and her sister, and ended in a downright rupture, which was never healed; no, not even when Queen Mary was on her deathbed, and Anne implored to be admitted to her presence.*

On the very next day after the quarrel, Marlborough, whose lady was certainly implicated in the quarrel, was dismissed from all his offices, both civil and military, and commanded not to appear again at court. This measure still farther envenomed the animosity of the Princess of Denmark. The king or the queen retaliated, and Anne was ordered to dismiss Lady Marlborough without delay. Instead of complying, the princess justified her favourite; whereupon an order was transmitted by the lord chamberlain, enjoining Lady Marlborough to remove from the palace of Whitehall. Anne would not stay in a place from which her dearest friend was driven; she went to Sion Hill, then the seat of the Duke of Somerset, and shortly afterwards established her residence at Berkeley House. These events occurred in January and February. On the 5th of May, Marlborough was suddenly arrested on a charge of high treason, and sent to the Tower. Warrants were likewise issued against the Earls of Huntingdon and Scarsdale, and Dr. Spratt, bishop of Rochester. Several other persons were also taken into custody, particularly Lord Middleton, the Lords Griffin and Dunmore, Sir John Fenwick, and

* Bishop Burnet. Archdeacon Coxe. Pictorial History of England. The Duchess of Marlborough's Account of her Conduct.

Colonels Slingsby and Sackville, all of whom were known partisans of the Stuart family.

The moment of these arrests was thought to be a dangerous crisis; for a French fleet was on the point of sailing with the intention of conveying the dethroned James to some part of the British coast. The avowed Jacobites were seized by way of precaution, and not on any specific charge. But, with regard to the Earls of Marlborough and Scarsdale, and Spratt, bishop of Rochester, the case was different. One Robert Young, a prisoner in Newgate, and very expert in counterfeiting hands, forged several letters and other papers, and accused the two earls and the prelate of having formed a treasonable association in favour of James II. Young was a scoundrel who had studied in the school of Titus Oates and Bedloe; but a remarkable *fact* is, that not *since* his disgrace with King William, but long *before it*, Marlborough had really been in correspondence with James and his queen, as had also his friend Godolphin, Admiral Herbert, and many others, who had taken a still more active part in promoting the Revolution of 1688; and, either at this period, or a little later, Admiral Russell (the brother of Lord William), Admirals Killigrew and Delaval, Sir James Montgomery, and at least a dozen other noblemen and gentlemen, were more than suspected of pursuing the same course. A want of fidelity and steadiness is, indeed, the prevailing vice of a revolutionary period. For many long years—perhaps even down to the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, the invasion of the young Pretender Charles Stuart, and the suppression of the rebellion of 1745—men's minds appear to have been frequently, if not constantly, haunted by the dread of a counter-revolution and the re-establishment of the exiled family.* Marlborough, like so many

* The exiled James himself says of his clandestine correspondents: "They were to be pardoned and in security, in case the king returned, and yet suffer nothing in the interim, nor to give any other proofs of their sincerity than bare words and empty promises."

others, may merely have wanted to secure an indemnity for himself and friends, in case of such an event; but this can scarcely excuse his double dealing; and his surreptitious correspondence, which was several times renewed after this period, must remain as a blot on the memory of our hero. It appears, indeed, that William and his ministers were subsequently in the secret, and that the letters despatched to the Court of St. Germain were intended merely to delude James and his advisers, and to get at their own secret intentions and plans; but these letters, however politically useful, could have conferred little honour on those who wrote them.

The truth is, that all sudden changes unsettle men's minds, and that all revolutions, however laudable in the object proposed, have a tendency to demoralize those who engage in them. By seeing the old give place to an unknown, untried *new*, and right and wrong habitually confounded, people insensibly adapt their principles to the season, and self-preservation and self-advancement become the chief rule of conduct. The persons who now figured in public life had grown up in an age of anarchy and intrigue, and there were few among them who made any pretensions either to public or private virtue. In both these respects, Marlborough was incomparably superior to every man of the day, except his friend Lord Godolphin; and it is with his own contemporaries that he must be compared.

The atrocious forgeries of Young, the Newgate prisoner, were detected the instant he was confronted with the Bishop of Rochester. Accordingly, the prelate, and all those implicated in the same charge, except Marlborough, were released without delay. Even the notorious Jacobites, such as Lord Middleton and Colonel Slingsby, were liberated in a few days, when news was received of the defeat of the French fleet off La Hogue, and all fear of invasion was subsiding. Yet Marlborough's detention, after the release of the others, was very short; for, on the 15th of June, the last day of the

term, he was admitted to bail in the Court of King's Bench, on the sureties of the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Marquis of Halifax, the Earl of Carbery, and Mr. Boyle.

Yet, on the 23rd of June, his own name, and the names of two of his sureties, the Earl of Shrewsbury and the Marquis of Halifax, were erased from the list of privy-councillors. There might have been some suspicion as well as spite in all this, for it has since been pretty clearly proved that both Shrewsbury and Halifax had exchanged secret letters with some of the adherents of the exiled family. At the beginning of Michaelmas term Marlborough, with his sureties, applied to be discharged from their recognisances; but the court of King's Bench refused, and they were obliged to wait for the meeting of parliament.

All this while the king was on the continent, where he narrowly escaped a plot laid to assassinate him; but he returned to England on the 19th of October, and was received by the people with acclamations. On the 4th of November William opened the parliament in person, with a gracious speech, in which there was more warmth of feeling than he usually displayed. At a very early period of the session, attention was drawn to the case of those who had been prisoners in the Tower. Marlborough, Scarsdale, and Huntingdon complained, in their places in the House of Lords, of the treatment they had received, and of the conduct of the judges who had refused to discharge them from their bail, or bring them to trial, conformably to the habeas corpus act. The Earl of Shrewsbury, one of Marlborough's sureties, supported the appeal, and represented Marlborough as ungratefully and unjustly used. The debate was vehement and prolonged. The House of Lords came to a resolution, "That no peer shall be remanded to prison by the King's Bench upon his appearing before them by virtue of the habeas corpus act, after having entered his prayer to be tried as the said act directs, or kept

under bail, unless there appear against him two witnesses upon oath, or in a capacity to be sworn." They appointed a day to consider in what manner they should discharge the lords from their recognisances; but the king terminated the business by discharging them himself, and the ministers were exonerated by a bill of indemnity.*

From January 1692 until the summer of 1701, Marlborough remained without any military or political employment. But the death of Queen Mary, which happened on the 28th of December 1694, made the king anxious, upon serious political grounds, for a reconciliation with the Princess Anne; and that being happily effected, it became clear that Marlborough, whose lady had hardly ever quitted the princess, over whom her influence was unbounded, would receive some countenance, if not be admitted into favour; and the more so as he had now many friends at court, and as the king had repeatedly expressed his regret at being altogether deprived of the services of such an excellent soldier and able diplomatist. In spite of his having been again accused of treasonable practices,† he was, at the earnest

* Bishop Burnet. Archdeacon Coxe. Pictorial History of England. Southey.

† See the trial of Sir John Fenwick, in any good history of England. Fenwick, who in the end was executed for conspiracy and treason, appears to have attempted to save his own life by implicating others. It is exceedingly probable Marlborough had never had any communication with him since the establishment of William on the throne. During the proceedings against Fenwick, a horrible suspicion—or something more—was cast upon one who was afterwards set up, in the spirit of party and faction, as a rival in military glory to the hero of Blenheim,—this was the eccentric Lord Monmouth, afterwards Lord Mordaunt and Earl of Peterborough. The wife of Sir John Fenwick delivered a paper of instructions, which had been sent to her husband through the Duchess of Norfolk, by this lord, containing explicit directions to the prisoner how to conduct his defence so as to implicate Marlborough, Godolphin, Shrewsbury, Admiral Russell, and others. Monmouth was dismissed from all his places, and sent to the Tower; but he was soon liberated, and secretly rewarded. It is yet a mysterious question whether this indulgence was owing to his

entreaty of Anne, appointed to be governor to her only child, the young Duke of Gloucester. The office was conferred upon Marlborough in the most gracious manner ; and in delivering the young prince into his care the king said, " Teach him to be like yourself, and he will not want accomplishments."

The coadjutor of Marlborough, in the office of preceptor, was the well-known historian, Dr. Burnet, bishop of Salisbury. The two differed widely in political principle and in notions of church government ; yet a mutual esteem grew up between them, and ended in a friendship which lasted through life. Their joint attendance upon the promising young prince was of very short duration ; for the Duke of Gloucester died, almost in Marlborough's arms, on the 30th of July 1700, having just completed his eleventh year.

In the month of November of the same year, 1700, the death of Charles II. king of Spain, made inevitable that long war called the " War of the Succession," in which Marlborough was destined to make the most conspicuous figure. Louis XIV. who had already aggrandized himself by many conquests and annexations, claimed for his young grandson, Philip, Duke of Anjou, the succession to the entire Spanish monarchy, whether in the old world or in the new ; for Lombardy, Naples, Sicily, and the Netherlands, were to be possessed as well as Spain, and all the Spanish colonies, whether on the American continent, on islands in the Atlantic or the Pacific, in Africa, India, or elsewhere, were all to remain to the Bourbon prince. It was reasonably dreaded that such an accession of strength would render France far too powerful for all her neighbours, and endanger the independence and the liberties of all Europe. A counter-claim was set up to the Spanish succession by the Emperor Leopold. Partition treaties and other diplomatic measures

services at the time of the Revolution, or to the dread which was entertained of his daring enterprising spirit : but in all these matters an impenetrable mystery meets one at every step.

were tried in vain : it was a question to be settled only by a general European war.

From the days of his earliest youth, the grand object of King William's life had been to set bounds to the aggrandizement and the insatiable ambition of the French monarch. The situation of the continent, the disunion or the apathy of the powers which ought to have united at once in one common league and indissoluble alliance, caused him agonies of uneasiness and alarm ; both sleep and appetite left him, and his health, which was never strong, became seriously affected. At this crisis he wanted a thorough soldier and a thorough statesman. Both qualifications existed in Marlborough, and, as the king himself said, *in no other man of the time*. Accordingly the earl was taken into full confidence and favour, and was invited to attend the king to the continent, as commander-in-chief in the Netherlands and minister plenipotentiary.

Marlborough embarked with his majesty at Margate on the 1st of July 1701, and reached the Hague on the 3rd. His first occupation was to negotiate the treaties which were to be formed with foreign powers, and to look out for allies against France wherever they were to be found. He was to reconstruct the grand alliance which William had reared in former days, and to give it greater height and breadth.

These negotiations were commenced under inauspicious circumstances ; for Louis XIV. had had the start, and had made good use of his time : he had won over the elector of Bavaria ; he had concluded a treaty of alliance with Portugal ; he had obtained the recognition of his grandson, Philip, in the Milanese and the two Sicilies ; by a treaty with the Duke of Savoy he had secured a free entrance into Italy ; while the occupation of Mantua and other fortresses, with the consent of the respective princes who had held them, not only opened the chief passages into Lombardy, but afforded the means for a direct attack against the hereditary dominions of the house of Austria. Moreover, Louis had

covered the Spanish frontier with troops, and had detained 15,000 Dutch troops, who, in virtue of a convention with Spain, formed the garrisons of the barrier towns on the Netherland frontier.

Germany was at this time distracted by civil and religious feuds, and nearly all her numerous petty states were subjected to the corruption of French gold or French promises. Denmark had been subsidised before the king left England. The Emperor Leopold, though harassed by a rebellion in Hungary, stood boldly forward to risk his all on the hazard of the die. Marlborough's efforts were directed to bring in Sweden, Russia, Prussia, and the German states, and to moderate at the same time the lofty pretensions of the emperor, who at this time was asserting the rights of his family to the whole Spanish monarchy. The abilities, discretion, and consummate address he displayed in soothing mutual jealousies and reconciling discordant views, in rousing the lethargic to a sense of their danger, and in proving to the mercenary and corrupt that they were driving a bad bargain, were truly marvellous, and excite our astonishment and admiration, even as we read the very incomplete accounts of them in despatches and state papers. The greatest difficulties he encountered came from two very opposite quarters—from the impetuous and fiery Charles XII. of Sweden, and from the phlegmatic States-General of Holland. He, however, overcame both. The maritime powers pledged themselves to join the common cause, and in the course of this summer and autumn most of the links of the new grand alliance against France were forged and united together.

In the course of this diplomacy, Marlborough gave strong proof of his attachment to the English constitution (scarcely a constitution at all at the time of the accession of our great William III.). The king and the Dutch government urged him, in his treaty with the emperor, to fix the number of troops which England should supply, without waiting for

the sanction of Parliament. "I am fully persuaded," said Marlborough to the government at home, "that if the king should be prevailed upon to settle this by his own authority, we shall never see a quiet day more in England." To his friend Godolphin he said, "Before God, I will die sooner than do so fatal a thing!" His royal master yielded to his representations.

On the 8th of March 1702, King William died at Kensington-palace, having previously recommended his successor to lean upon Marlborough, as the most proper person in her dominions to lead her armies and direct her counsels.*

The dying request of one of the greatest and wisest of all the sovereigns that have ever worn the English crown, must have carried weight with others; but with Queen Anne it was scarcely needed. Although in the thirty-eighth year of her age at the time of her accession, Anne was as much under the tutorage of Lord and Lady Marlborough as if she had been a maiden of fifteen. She could not live without the society of her life-long friend; she could only think as Lady Marlborough thought. The queen had not been three days on the throne ere she conferred on his lordship the envied Garter. On the very next day she appointed him captain-general of the English forces at home and abroad, and soon after made him master of the ordnance. His countess was made groom of the stole and mistress of the robes, and entrusted with the entire management of the privy purse. Other favours were heaped upon the commanding and still fascinating favourite.

The remodelling of the cabinet was quite as important and beneficial to Marlborough as all these honours and places. Lord Godolphin was named lord treasurer, and put at the head of the government. This statesman and the great soldier had been close friends for very many years; Lady

* Archdeacon Coxe's *Memoirs of Marlborough*. Bishop Burnet's *History of His Own Time*. Lediard's *Life of Marlborough*. Pictorial *History of England*, reign of William III.

Marlborough had almost as much influence over Godolphin as she possessed over her Majesty; and, for some three years, Godolphin's only son, Francis, and one of Marlborough's lovely daughters, the Lady Henrietta Churchill, had been happily married. During his frequent and long absences on the continent, the generalissimo maintained a most active correspondence with the premier; and his countess was constantly in personal communication or consultation with Godolphin, who entertained an almost unlimited deference for her ladyship's abilities and opinions. Bishop Burnet, who was intimately acquainted with him, as well as with Lord and Lady Marlborough, draws a striking, and truth-looking portrait of this accomplished statesman and very able and honest financier. It is one of the best of the many historical portraits given to us by the historian of his own times.

"Godolphin was a younger brother of an ancient family in Cornwall, that had been bred about the king (Charles II.) from a page, and was considered as one of the ablest men that belonged to the court. He had a clear apprehension, and despatched business with great method, and with so much temper that he had no personal enemies; but his silence begot a jealousy, which hung long upon him. His notions were for the court; but his incorrupt and sincere way of managing the concerns of the Treasury created in all people a very high esteem for him. He loved gaming the most of any man of business I ever knew, and gave one reason for it—because it delivered him from the obligation to talk much. He had true principles of religion and virtue, and was free from all vanity, and never heaped up wealth; so that all things being laid together, he was one of the worthiest and wisest men that have been employed in our time. And he has had much of the confidence of four of our succeeding sovereigns."*

* Godolphin served Charles II. James II. William III. and Queen Anne.

That which Bishop Burnet calls gaming must not be taken for *gambling*, as Godolphin played for trifling stakes. The late Prince Talleyrand, who really *gambled*, gave it as his excuse for playing at all, that it stopped long and superfluous conversation, and allowed no room for political discussion, or the asking of indiscreet questions. However silent and sustained Godolphin may have been in general society, he could unbend himself, and be talkative and jocular, and even turn his pretty rhymes to ladies' eyebrows in the domestic circles of Lady Marlborough.*

But whatever was Godolphin, the fortunes of Marlborough were henceforward inseparably linked with his: the generalissimo and the lord treasurer must rise and fall together.

Marlborough's heart and soul were turned to the continent, and to the means of resisting the domination of France. There was slight chance that Anne would depart from the diplomatic and other arrangements he had made for William in the preceding year. She had scarcely put her foot on the throne, before she despatched a letter to the States-General, announcing her intention to maintain all the treaties and alliances concluded by the late monarch. As early as the 28th of March, only twenty days after the demise of his late royal master, Marlborough was again negotiating at the Hague. His presence called forth transports of joy. Throughout Europe, every man honestly opposed to Louis XIV. looked up to him as the great chief who alone could effectually direct the continental war.

The French had rapidly and successfully gone on in their career of violence, craft, and usurpation. Spain, the Netherlands, the Milanese, and other dependencies, were in their hands; the countries on the Upper Rhine were at their feet, and both from that side and from the side of Lombardy, Southern Germany seemed to lie open to them. The Emperor

* See the verses of the Lord High Treasurer to the beautiful Lady Anne Churchill, in Archdeacon Coxe's Memoirs.

Leopold, the heartiest member of the coalition, was more than ever embarrassed by the Hungarian rebellion. Nevertheless, the imperial minister and the States-General immediately agreed with Marlborough that war should be declared on the same day at Vienna, the Hague, and London. Marlborough also arranged a plan of operations; and the campaign was even opened during his short stay on the continent, by the siege of Keyzerswerth, a fortress on the Lower Rhine, of which the French had obtained possession.

By the 26th of April, the earl was again in London, settling political differences which had arisen both at court and in the cabinet, and in arranging other weighty matters with Lord Godolphin, upon whose financial skill and management must mainly depend the means of carrying on an expensive, protracted war. By the 28th of May, Marlborough was back at the Hague, where, after long debates, the States-General conferred on him the supreme command of their army. After a short stay at the Hague, he hastened to Nimeguen to put himself at the head of the united forces.

BOOK II.

AT this time, when Marlborough first figured as the commander-in-chief of an army, and first opened a campaign on his own account, he was fifty-two years old, but in a high state of health, capable of great endurance, and still remarkably handsome.

Marshal Saxe, in speaking of the qualifications necessary for the commander-in-chief of an army, gives the first place to courage, the second to genius, and the third to health. Under the first of these qualities must be classed that entire self-possession, that promptitude of decision, and that undaunted perseverance, which are absolutely essential to make a great general,—for bravery is a virtue which he may be said to share in common with the whole of his army. By genius is here meant a fertility of expedient, quickness of invention, and a readiness in the application and discovery of resources. Under health is included all bodily requisites; a quickness of sight, an unwearied activity, and a power of enduring continued fatigue. To find so many valuable requisites united in one person is certainly rare. This work, brief as it is, will prove how wonderfully they were united in Marlborough.

Several of the minor German states, as Brunswick-Luneburg, the Palatinate, &c., had now come in to the Grand Alliance, or had accepted subsidies, and promised to furnish troops. It is impossible to state the number with which the allies opened the campaign, for many more men were put down upon paper than ever appeared in the field.

Like the most illustrious of his successors—the Duke of Wellington—on his first going to Portugal, Marlborough,

on taking the conduct of this war, had the disadvantages of commanding troops of different nations, languages, and religions, and of encountering the evil effects of a common belief in the invincibility of the French. To what an extent the French themselves cherished this prestige, will be best seen in the correspondence of their generals with the English commander-in-chief.*

The main body of the allies, under the temporary command of Ginckel, who had fought under King William in Ireland, and had been by him created Earl of Athlone, was assembled in the vicinity of Cleves, to cover that part of the frontier which lies between the Rhine and the Meuse; Cohorne, the great engineer, stood with about 10,000 men by the mouth of the Scheldt, to secure that quarter; Louis, Margrave of Baden, was on the Upper Rhine with an uncertain force; the Prince of Saarbruck, with from 22,000 to 25,000 men—Prussians, Palatines, and Dutch—was besieging Keyserwerth; and some other forces were moving on different lines to co-operate.

On the other hand, the main body of the French army, under the command of the Duke of Burgundy and Marshal Boufflers, was assembled on the Meuse, and in the strong fortresses existing in the bishopric of Liege; Marshal Tallard was marching, with 13,000 men, to the relief of Keyserwerth; and the Count Delamotte and the Spanish Marquis of Bedmar, who commanded in the name of Philip King of Spain, covered the western frontier of the Spanish Netherlands.

The Duke of Burgundy was only a royal highness, but Marshal Boufflers, who really managed the campaign, was a pupil of Condé and Turenne, and considered one of the best generals in the French service: he was a veteran at the time, being six years older than Marlborough. The

* The Letters and Despatches of John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough, from 1702 to 1712, edited by the late General the Right Hon. Sir George Murray, five vols. 8vo. London, 1845.

letters of Louis XIV. shew how confidently that monarch counted upon him for victory and conquest.

The first blow was struck by the French, while Marlborough was employed in the always-tedious work of settling plans with the Dutch ministers and the representatives of the allies. His Royal Highness the Duke of Burgundy, recalling Marshal Tallard, joined his forces to his, and made a sudden move upon Nimeguen, which was without a garrison, and almost without artillery. But the burghers of Nimeguen were active and brave, and the Earl of Athlone, by a brilliant march, got to their assistance, and saved the place.

Marlborough soon began to experience the extreme difficulty of giving a unity of plan and purpose to the jealous and captious leaders of a heterogeneous coalition. It was near the end of June before his arrangements were matured; and even then the Prince of Saarbruck, the Earl of Athlone, and the other leading generals, were in no disposition to submit to his authority and act cordially with him. At the same time he was hampered and vexed by the field-deputies—obstinate functionaries whom the States-General were accustomed to send out with their armies, and who, on their part, were bound to do nothing, and permit nothing to be done by the Dutch troops, without advising with their high mightinesses at the Hague. These field-deputies, nearly always civilians and not soldiers, were a thorn in the side of our great commander from the beginning of this war to the very end thereof: they were to Marlborough what Portuguese and Spanish juntas and generals, and Freires and bishops of Oporto were, a century later, to Lord Wellington; they spoiled many of his best combinations, and tried his patience and temper almost beyond the powers of human endurance.

However, Keyserwerth having surrendered, Marlborough collected the forces which had been engaged in that siege, brought up the English from Breda, and, being joined by

other bodies of the allies, found himself at the head of 60,000 men. But even now he was checked and distracted by three or four plans of operation, each of which had its advocates in the allied army. Moreover, when he had overcome the timidity of the Dutch government, who were trembling for the safety of their own frontiers, and when he was about to do something, the general of the Hanoverians announced that his men could not march without the orders of Bothmar, the Elector's minister at the Hague. He summoned Bothmar to the camp, and, after losing some valuable time, removed these obstacles. But the Prussians had their scruples and difficulties as well as the Hanoverians, and the removal of these cost more time; and, in war, time is treasure and power.

"Many faults," says Marshal Saxe, "can be amended, and many losses can be repaired, all excepting that of time. The commander-in-chief should therefore be always in the neighbourhood of his advanced guard; all news must come to him by that channel, and by this means alone can he acquire the requisite knowledge of plans and circumstances, to direct his projects in sufficient time for their execution with rapidity and effect."

At last, on the 7th of July, Marlborough crossed the Waal, and established his head-quarters at Duckenburg, a country-seat belonging to the Count Schulemburg, a little to the south-west of Nimeguen.* On the 16th his army was posted at Over-Asselt, with the Meuse in the rear, and the French in front, at the distance of two short leagues. On the 20th he writes to Godolphin, "I have this night proposed the leaving twenty squadrons of horse and eighteen battalions of foot, to entrench themselves before Nimeguen, and to pass the Meuse with the rest of the army, or to march with the whole towards Cleves, in order to get between Venloo and the French, so as to be able to attack them. The fear the States have of Nimeguen and the passage of

* General Sir George Murray's Letters and Despatches of the Duke.

the Rhine, hinders the advantage of having the superiority."

At length he removed these fears, and obtained from the States-General full powers to execute his own plan, which was offensive. He moved forward *en masse* on the 27th, and by the 30th had his advanced posts near Hamont. The French, meanwhile, had suddenly decamped by night, and were now making forced marches in the direction of Peer and Bray. He expected a battle; but the French would not risk an attack, though one or two small fortresses were assaulted and carried under their eyes. On the 31st, Marlborough was twelve hours on horseback, reconnoitring the ground and ascertaining the French line of march. Although Tallard had come up with fresh forces, the French continued to edge off towards the Demer. Marlborough's object was to throw himself between them and that little river, and to give them battle on some exposed heaths; but, either through the slowness of their troops, or the indecision of the Dutch field-deputies, he failed in this attempt; and, though during two days he was marching on a parallel line with the French (not quite so near, but like Lord Wellington with the army of Marshal Marmont during the two days which preceded our glorious victory at Salamanca), no fighting took place. Although he was at times near enough to open a cannonade on the French, he could neither intercept their retreat nor do them any considerable mischief. Like the famous scene in Spain, when two highly disciplined armies moved so long side by side without exchanging a shot, this scene in the Spanish Netherlands is described as being most striking and magnificent—a thing for a soldier never to forget. The discipline, the dress, the entire equipment of the British troops, excited the admiration of foes as well as friends.

The Duke of Burgundy, however, quitted the army to avoid the dishonour of witnessing the reduction of the fortresses on the Meuse. Venloo was invested on the 5th

of September, and was forced to surrender on the 23rd; on the 29th Ruremond and Stevenswaert were invested, and both places were taken by the 7th of October.

While these operations were in progress, the army of the empire, under the command of Joseph, the young king of the Romans, had reduced Landau, and threatened the whole of Alsace. In consequence of this loss, the French were obliged to weaken their main body, and to leave exposed the important town of Liege. Marlborough instantly moved for that place, opened his batteries on the 20th of October, and compelled the French garrison to surrender on the 29th. By this important capture the Dutch frontier was secured, and the navigation of the Meuse was wholly free.*

With these operations the campaign ended: the French retired within their lines, and Marlborough, after distributing his troops in winter-quarters, began his journey homeward. As he was descending the Meuse in a barge with the Dutch deputies, Cohorne being before him in a larger and swifter boat, he was surprised by a French partisan from Guelder, who, with thirty-five men, seized the tow-rope, hauled in the boat, and made all in it prisoners. The object of the party, however, seems to have been chiefly plunder, for, after pillaging the boat and the passengers, they let them go on the production of French passports.† On reaching the Hague, Marlborough was

* Letters and Despatches, as given by General Sir George Murray and Archdeacon Coxe.

† "The Earl of Marlborough," says Sir George Murray, "was in a great degree indebted for his escape, on this occasion, to the presence of mind of one of his attendants, named Gill, who happening to have in his possession a passport which had been granted by the French general for the use of General Churchill, who had not employed it, put it into Lord Marlborough's hands, who thus passed for his brother. The Duke of Marlborough bestowed an annual pension of fifty pounds on Gill, from the date of this adventure, and also gave him an appointment as commissary for exchange of prisoners. The last letter of the series now

received with transports of joy, for the news of his capture had preceded his arrival. "Till they saw me," he writes to his wife, "they thought me a prisoner in France, so that I was not ashore one minute before I had great crowds of the common people, some endeavouring to take me by the hand, and all crying out, 'Welcome!'"

Had Marlborough really been made prisoner at the beginning of the war, it may be doubted whether Europe would have been rescued, and the pride of the French humbled. There was only one other truly great general on the side of the allies—the illustrious Prince Eugene—and he gained his best laurels when fighting by the side of Marlborough, and would by himself have been scarcely equal to all the work in hand, or to the war in Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands.

"Your captivity," said the Pensionary Heinsius, in a complimentary address to Marlborough, "was on the point of causing the slavery of these provinces, and restoring to France the power of extending her uncontrollable dominion over all Europe. No hope was left if she retained in bondage the man whom we revere as the instrument of Providence to secure independence to the greater part of the Christian world."

In the course of this campaign one or two errors are said to have been committed by the commander-in-chief.

But Marlborough, though an accomplished soldier, knew that he had yet something to learn, and that there are parts of the profession that are scarcely to be learned at all except by practice in the field, and the frequent handling of large bodies of troops. "I wish, Doctor," quoth my Uncle Toby, "you had seen what prodigious armies we had in Flanders!" In fact, the forces which took the field under William III. and then under Marlborough,

publishing is one from the Duke to the Grand Pensionary, recommending Gill, who resided at the Hague, to his protection."—Editorial note to the Marlborough Letters and Despatches.

like those of their adversaries the French, were unprecedented in number, at least in modern Europe. "In the time of Louis XIII." says Hamilton, in his memoirs of Grammont, "great men commanded small armies, and small armies achieved great things." But the times were changed; under Louis XIV. it would have been indeed a dangerous thing to attempt to campaign with a small force. In proportion as the armies were increased in size, so much greater became the demand for skill and science on the part of those who headed them or directed their movements. Marlborough practised, studied, and learned. Each of his campaigns may be considered as an improvement upon that which preceded it. He did not entertain the common opinion, that a general must be born with military genius, and that, in such a case, study is unnecessary. He would have combated this opinion, if not in the words, in the very thoughts of one of his great successors, the Archduke Charles of Austria:—

"This," says he, "is only the excuse of idleness or presumption. Genius is born with us, it is true; but a man can only become great by the cultivation of his talents. One so gifted may sometimes neglect the systematic course of instruction, and outstrip, as it were, common experience; he may advance to results, without pausing to consider principles; but more frequently he becomes involved in inextricable difficulties; and should he reach to a high pitch of elevation, it is more commonly the effect of some peculiar good fortune than of his own individual merit. Genius, therefore, requires to be guided and directed—it must be refined, assisted, and, in some sort, kept in order, whether it be by an accidental or a fortunate train of circumstances, by the influence of what is passing without, by necessity, by the concatenation of events, by reflection, or by experience, in a word, it must be formed. And if it be true that without genius no man can ever become a great general, we shall find, on the other hand, proofs suf-

ficient, in the pages of history, that those commanders of armies, whose talent was rather acquired than natural, have, when they united perseverance and boldness with discernment in their projects, triumphed over those who had nothing beyond genius to trust to.”*

From the opening of this campaign in the year 1702, or, we may say, from the accession of Queen Anne, Marlborough's waverings and tergiversations seem altogether to have ceased. Efforts were not wanting, either on the part of the court of Versailles, or on that of the court of St. Germain, to win him over by flattery and corruption, but they were all thrown away upon him. Not a trace of insincerity or double-dealing can be detected from this period: whatever may have been his former conduct, which in some respects may still appear inexplicable, he was now as true as the needle to the pole. Such was also the conviction of a deceased British officer of the highest reputation, after he had devoted very much time and study to this part of Marlborough's history, and to all his campaigns from 1702 to 1712.†

Lady Marlborough was now all powerful at court, and in a condition to expose any intrigue or thwart any faction that might be raised against her husband. Her ladyship commanded all the avenues which led to royal favour: she says herself:—

“The king died, and the Princess of Denmark took his place. This elevation of my mistress to the throne brought me into a new scene of life, and into a new sort of consideration with all those whose attention, either by curiosity or ambition, was turned to politics and the court. Hitherto, my favour with her royal highness, though it had sometimes furnished matter of conversation to the public, had

* *Principes de la Stratégie.*

† The late General Sir George Murray, who, in 1845 (the last year of his own valued, honourable life), edited and published the Marlborough Despatches.

been of no moment to the affairs of the nation, she herself having no share in the councils by which they were managed. But from this time I began to be looked upon as a person of consequence, without whose approbation, at least, neither places, nor pensions, nor honours, were bestowed by the Crown. The intimate friendship with which the queen was known to honour me, afforded a plausible foundation for this opinion.*

This court influence of her ladyship was of the utmost importance to Marlborough, while so long absent abroad, and so much absorbed in his campaigns, and foreign politics.

The events of the campaign of 1702, which had just closed, convinced Marlborough that a considerable augmentation of troops would be necessary, more particularly as the French were already making efforts to open the next campaign in the Netherlands in very great force. During his stay at the Hague, he urged Heinsius to stimulate the Dutch, and he wrote most earnest letters to his friend Lord Godolphin, urging him to make every possible exertion in England.

On his return to London, towards the close of the year, he was received with enthusiasm. The capture of one important fortress had usually been considered work enough for a campaign; but in this campaign, five most important places had been taken from the enemy, and other advantages had been obtained. Shortly after his return, by letters-patent, dated December 14, 1702, the earl was created Marquis of Blandford and Duke of Marlborough. This elevation in rank was rapidly followed by the greatest of all domestic calamities: his only son, the promising young

* An Account of the Conduct of the Dowager-Duchess of Marlborough, from her first coming to Court to the year 1710: in a Letter from herself to my Lord ——. London, 1742. Hooke, the historian, is known to have assisted the duchess in the composition of this very curious volume.

Marquis of Blandford, on whose account the ducal coronet was chiefly prized, fell sick of the smallpox at Cambridge, and died there on the 20th of February 1703, Marlborough only arriving in time to close his eyes. His remains were interred in the magnificent chapel of King's College, where a monument is dedicated to his memory, with an inscription, expressive of his amiable qualities, and the inconsolable affliction of his parents. Marlborough needed not this severe lesson to teach him the nothingness of worldly honours and greatness; he was a Christian, and thoroughly a believer. He grieved, but not as one without hope. Had his son survived, he would probably have served with him in the next campaign, for the marquis had persisted in his resolution to enter the army, and had promised to secure for his friend *Robert Walpole** a commission in the cavalry, that they might both serve together. During the progress of that campaign, the tender recollections of his brave, handsome, accomplished boy, frequently intruded on the mind, and almost overcame the firm heart of the great soldier.

In 1703, he took the field unusually early. On the 20th of April, just two months after the melancholy event at Cambridge, he was in the camp before Bonn; but he had quitted England for the Low Countries as early as the 17th of March.

The Duke of Savoy, whose geographical position, and especially his holding the keys of the Alps, gave him far more importance than he ever could have claimed by the extent of his dominions, or the number and wealth of his subjects, upon seeing the successes in Italy of Prince Eugene, began to waver in his alliance with Louis XIV.; and the King of Portugal fully entered into the grand alliance against that monarch in the spring of the year. Louis, moreover, was distracted and distressed by the insurrection, within his own territories, of the oppressed Pro-

* Afterwards the great prime minister of George I. and George II.

testants of the Cevennes, a mountainous country bordering on Catalonia. At the instance of Marlborough, supplies of arms and ammunition were sent from England to these insurgents, who long gave occupation to a considerable corps of the French army.

But on the Rhine events had occurred that greatly tended to revive the spirit of Louis XIV. The Elector of Bavaria, who at last declared openly for France, had surprised Ulm, and opened a communication with the French on the Upper Rhine; and Marshal Villars had defeated the Margrave of Baden, and cleared the passages leading to the Black Forest, while Marshal Tallard, on the other hand, had extended his forces along the Upper Rhine and Moselle, and reduced Treves and Traerbach. The Germans were thus prevented from profiting by the reduction of Landau, and were, in a manner, hemmed in at Stolhoffen.

Louis had determined to open the campaign with the utmost vigour, and a mighty plan had been framed for the annihilation of the house of Austria. While Marshal Villeroy was again to threaten the Dutch frontier, and occupy Marlborough in that corner, the troops on the Upper Rhine were to march through the defiles of the Black Forest, and join the Bavarians; from beyond the Alps the Duke of Vendome was to open his way through the Tyrol, and these two armies, moving in different directions, and favoured in the very heart of the empire by the Elector of Cologne, as well as by the Bavarians, were to form a junction between the Inn and the Danube, were to stimulate the malcontents in Bohemia, to call upon the insurgents in Hungary, and then, like a torrent swollen, were to roll on to Vienna.

In accordance with this grand plan, Marshal Villars broke up from his cantonments before the winter was over, surprised several bodies of Germans in their quarters, and reduced the important town of Kehl. And soon after this, leaving Marshal Tallard to keep the Margrave of Baden in check at Stolhoffen, Villars struck through the Black

Forest, and descended into Bavaria, where he was joined by the elector, who had already defeated the Austrians, driven them beyond the Inn and the Danube (thus leaving clear the proposed point of junction), and taken Neuburg and Ratisbon, in which imperial city a diet was assembled to pronounce his forfeiture, and put him to the ban of the empire.

Count Styrum moved with 20,000 of the emperor's troops to free the Margrave of Baden; but, by the advice of Villars, the Elector of Bavaria threw himself between these two imperial forces, attacked the count near Donawert, and completely routed him.

Continuing this career of success, the French and Bavarians took Augsburg, and lay across what seemed an open road to the old walls of Vienna. But they were not cheered by any sight of the heads of columns which the Duke of Vendome was to lead from Italy through the Tyrol; the Elector and the French general disagreed, and Villars, who was wanted to look after the insurgents in the Cevennes, was recalled. And from this moment the grand scheme of the French tottered.

Death had relieved Marlborough from the jealousies of the prince of Saarbruck and Ginekel, Earl of Athlone, and he now stood in the allied camp without a rival. By his advice the Prussians had been acting during a part of the winter, as well as the French, and they had reduced, in the month of February, the fortress of Rheinberg, whence they had proceeded to blockade Guelder, the only place in Spanish Guelderland, still held by the enemy. He found Holland actually threatened on her frontier by Villeroi and Boufflers, who had commenced operations for recovering the strong places on the Meuse, from which he had driven them in his previous campaign. It appears to have been the design of the English general to act upon the offensive, and to invade French Flanders and Brabant; but the States-General preferred commencing with the siege of

Bonn, flattering themselves that the elector would capitulate rather than risk the ruin of his city. "I wish," says Marlborough in a letter to Lord Godolphin, "it may prove so; for otherwise it will cost us a great many men, and a good deal of time, which we might expend more usefully in Brabant, now that a great many of their troops are gone towards Germany."*

He repaired to Nimeguen to concert with Cohorne the plan for the siege of Bonn. He then inspected the fortifications and garrisons of Venloo, Ruremond, Maestricht, and the other places he had taken the year before on the Meuse. This done, he crossed the country to Cologne, where he felt "a good deal of spleen," for nothing was ready for the siege, and Cohorne coolly proposed to let it alone till the end of the year. Marlborough, however, gave orders for investing the place, and proceeded to Bonn with forty battalions, sixty squadrons, and a hundred pieces of artillery. The trenches were opened on the 3rd of May, and the Marquis d'Allegre capitulated on the 15th. During the siege the news from Germany continued to be "very ill"; and Villeroy and Boufflers, who had manœuvred in vain to save Bonn, seemed to be increasing their strength upon the Meuse. Marlborough, however, returned to his former plan of transferring the war into the heart of Brabant and French Flanders; the Dutch generals, Cohorne, Spaar, and Opdam, were detached to Bergen-op-Zoom to forward the necessary preparations; and, as a part of this plan, an English fleet, with a strong land force on board, was to alarm the French coast from Calais to Dieppe, and, in conjunction with the Dutch troops, to make a descent near the latter place.

With fifty-nine battalions and 129 squadrons, Marlborough crossed the river Yaar close under the walls of Maestricht, and near the heights of Hautain, between the Yaar and the Meuse, he surprised some considerable corps

* Archdeacon Coxe's Memoirs.

of the French army, and nearly cut them off. The French, who had long been accustomed to slow movements on the part of the allies, had no expectation of such rapid ones; they retreated in confusion, destroyed the works of Tongres, and fled, without halting, three leagues beyond Thys.

Marlborough fixed his camp at Thys. Here he was greatly disconcerted and vexed, for he learned that Cohorne had obtained the consent of the States-General to employ his troops in an irruption into the country of Waes, where he hoped to levy large contributions, "which," says Marlborough, "these people like but too well." This entirely deranged his plan: he had intended in the first place to reduce Antwerp and Ostend, two towns of the utmost importance; but now he was obliged to remain inactive, keeping as near to the French army as possible, till Cohorne's expedition should be over. "At this time," he writes to Godolphin, "the strength of the French army is 118 squadrons and sixty-one battalions; ours consists of 125 squadrons and fifty-nine battalions, but our battalions are stronger than theirs, so that I think we have a good deal the superiority, which is very plainly the opinion of the French, *since they always decamp when we come near them.*"

And Marlborough had other troubles: the confederates on the Upper Rhine were clamouring for reinforcements, and there were some both in England and Holland who would have greatly weakened his army in the Netherlands in order to send them succour. "This," said Marlborough, "would only answer the purpose of bringing things here into the same bad condition as they are there;" and he so far prevailed that only twenty squadrons and eight battalions were detached to that quarter. Too many of the allies would have made a piecemeal campaign of it, and have frittered away time and means in desultory warfare; he wanted to keep his forces concentrated in order to strike one great blow. The proverb, that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety, is not applicable to military affairs.

No general was ever more crippled in his operations than Marlborough at this time ;—an obstinate Dutch field-deputy, or a refractory, perverse commander of the foreign troops, could at any time paralyze his operations.

His heart was set upon the taking of Ostend and Antwerp ; but it was not until the 10th of June that he could move anywhere. Then he marched upon Hanef, between Thys and the Meuse. In this march he expected an engagement, but the French retreated to a position on the Mehaigne. From his camp at Hanef he wrote to urge Cohorne to prepare for the siege of Antwerp, and at the same time expressed to his friends in England a confident hope of bringing the French to a general battle, which he thought would be “a far greater advantage to the common cause than the taking of twenty towns.”

The French now occupied lines which extended from the Mehaigne to Antwerp, as also a series of fortifications stretching from Antwerp towards Ostend ; and to maintain these defences they had two flying camps—one under Bedmar, near Antwerp ; the other under Delamotte, near Bruges. When, at length, Cohorne was ready to act, he took up a position near Stabroek, east of the Scheldt, and about four miles north of Antwerp ; Opdam was posted at Bergen-op-Zoom (that strong, fatal fortress which witnessed the shedding of so much British blood in 1814) with a good body of fresh troops, who were suddenly to advance upon Antwerp ; General Spaar was detached to occupy the attention of Delamotte, and to maintain a communication with Cohorne ; while Marlborough himself was to harass and detain the main army of the French, and at a given moment to enter the lines between Lierre and Antwerp. This was a combined movement, or series of movements, from different points, always difficult to execute—a good plan, but liable to be disconcerted by many accidents, and by the slightest imprudence or want of punctuality in any one of the co-operating columns. The French main still carefully avoided

an action: they were thrown into consternation by a sudden march made by Marlborough to Opheer; but after passing a whole night under arms, they felt themselves safe upon some strong ground near Landen. "Since we had no action yesterday," says Marlborough, writing to the duchess on the 17th of June, "I believe we shall have none this campaign; for the French are now in a very strong country, and go behind the lines when they please." Cohorne and his Dutchmen, who had generally been accused of being too slow, were now too fast. Cohorne himself had crossed the Scheldt on the 15th of June, and formed a junction with Spaar; and on the following morning, these two Dutch generals made a combined attack on the French lines near Antwerp. Spaar penetrated as far as Steenbroek, suffering considerable loss; Cohorne forced the works at the Point of Galle, and reduced Fort St. Anthony. But Marlborough was not, and could not possibly be at hand; and it was the evening of the 18th before Opdam got up from Bergen-op-Zoom to the village of Ekeren, a little to the north of Antwerp, where he established himself in an isolated position, being left without support, by Cohorne having crossed the Scheldt. The French, though no longer led by the genius of a Turenne, a Condé, or a Luxembourg, saw the gross mistake committed, and profited by it. Marshal Boufflers, with 20,000 men, mostly cavalry, marched in all haste for Antwerp. Marlborough endeavoured, but in vain, to keep up with him. Boufflers reached Antwerp, united his forces with those of Bedmar, and completely routed Opdam's division. Opdam himself fled the field in no very honourable manner; but his second in command availed himself of the canals and broad dykes, rallied the troops, repulsed some charges, and effected a retreat to Lillo on the Scheldt, with comparatively little loss. But by this movement, Boufflers had wholly disconcerted Marlborough's grand object of gaining Antwerp; and all that the allies

could effect during the rest of this campaign was, to take the towns of Huy, Limberg, and a few other places.*

We must notice, thus early, that the Duke of Marlborough is to be judged, as a general, by the system of war which obtained in his days, and not by the mode of warfare which was introduced by the generals of the French Republic, and carried out by Napoleon Bonaparte. Neither King William III. nor the Duke of Marlborough—any more than any one of the great French commanders to whom they were opposed—was an inventor or an innovator. Each only tried to carry to perfection the established system of war, and, judged by that system, each must appear a consummate general. It was under William and Marlborough that our troops first acquired that distinguished character which they have since maintained; and that such a degree of regularity and precision was given to the art of war, that the movements of hostile armies became more like a courteous and well-bred display of talent and enterprise than the desperate attempts of men brought into the field for the slaughter of one another. After a summer spent in manœuvres, generally conducted with beautiful tactics, but sometimes of no very decided kind, both armies retired into winter quarters by mutual consent: if the commander of an army sat down before a town, it became the object of enterprise for all the daring spirits who chanced to be with him; and the bad season of the year passed with a degree of intercourse between officers and men of the hostile cantonments, which very much softened the asperities of war.†

French and English generals frequently exchanged letters of compliment and little presents. Some of these letters, preserved in the "Marlborough Correspondence," are sufficiently curious and characteristic. Thus, in one of them,

* Archdeacon Coxe's *Memoirs*. General Sir George Murray's *Letters and Despatches*. Bishop Burnet's *History of his Own Times*.

† See a short but able article in the *Quarterly Review*, January 1820, vol. xxii.

we find that old gallant, the Marshal Villeroi, after he had been repeatedly humbled and beaten by the duke, sending to him a portrait of his mistress, the receipt of which Marlborough acknowledges with courtesy and an amusing gravity. There were even times when the heads of hostile columns would salute before engaging, like two gentlemen or two professors of the "noble science of defence," before they attack each other with foils, and when troops drawn up in line would hesitate as to which should give the first fusilade. Thus, at the battle of Fontenoi, the royal French guards stood waiting, and when their adversaries motioned them to begin, one of their officers shouted, "*Messieurs ! la Garde Française n'est jamais la première à tirer !*"*

In the days of Marlborough, and long after his time, fortified places were treated with respect, and frequently looked upon as insurmountable barriers; and then, sieges could not be carried on in northern or cold countries in the depth of winter, the ground being too hard for digging and working in the trenches. These notions of our forefathers are now indeed exploded. A total change has been introduced in the mode of making war: "The restless energies of France, in her republican state, allowed no repose for her own troops or those of her enemies; and the daring and impetuous spirit of Bonaparte completed the establishment of a system which has set all former rules and practice at defiance: fearlessly leaving behind him those strong places which a fortunate campaign would naturally reduce, he advanced to his object with a rapidity and a power which seldom failed of success; and, regardless of the expenditure of human life which his projects might occasion, he taught his men to bivouac under every extremity of the season. In balancing the comparative merits of these opposite modes of warfare, it will be admitted, we believe, that, under the old system, the consumption of men by 'famine and the ague,' during the protracted operations of sieges and blockades,

* Gentlemen! the French guard never fires first.

was fearfully great, and that, generally speaking, the most rapid mode of making war will prove the most humane.”*

The old system will never be restored; but yet it will always deserve an attentive study as a great era in the art of war, and as a thing perfect in its kind. The tendency of our day is to disregard regularly fortified places, and to depend rather upon field-works; a natural corollary of the assumption that no fortress of the first order can resist more than thirty-two days, if attacked by an adequate force.†

Though it would, perhaps, be as unwise as it would be useless, to wish to recall that which is departed, we may regret the old courtesies and amenities of foes in the field or in winter cantonments, and the “*Gran bontà de’ Cavalieri antichi*”—the goodness of the commanders of the olden time.

During this harassing and disappointing campaign of 1703, Marlborough frequently congratulated himself on being with the army, instead of being in England engaged in the more disagreeable and irritating turmoils of politics and party strife. The Whigs and Tories were most violently set against each other, and, but for the Duchess of Marlborough, the Lord Treasurer Godolphin, who was attempting a fusion of parties in the cabinet, would have been unseated, and, notwithstanding his integrity and patriotism, consigned to impeachment and disgrace. At one moment Godolphin was well nigh resigning and withdrawing from public affairs altogether. That minister’s situation in the cabinet and at court was, indeed, so irksome, that his friend was obliged to confess that he would rather be where he was, notwithstanding the Dutch deputies, who “*made his life a burthen*,” and all the hardships incident to war. “I hear so much of the unreasonable animosities of parties,” says Marlborough in a letter to Godolphin, “that I pity you with all my heart. I have, God knows, very little rest

* Quarterly Review; article already cited.

† See James Fergusson, Esq., *Essay on Field Fortification*, &c.

here, but I should have less quiet of mind if I were obliged to be in your situation." At the same time Marlborough himself was made the subject of satires, lampoons, and slanders: ignorant or factious men criticised his campaign, and London was ringing with predictions that he would either be obliged to re-embark his army and return home, or to prepare his mind for a signal defeat in the spring of the ensuing year. The same vaticinations accompanied the Duke of Wellington from his first landing on the coast of Portugal until the day when he stood, as a conqueror, looking down upon France from the crest of the Pyrenees. In the case of Marlborough they attended him until he had captured every fortress to which he had laid siege, and defeated every French general that had taken the field against him.

The outcry and despondency in England were unreasonable. If there had been a failure as to Antwerp, on the other side the far grander plan of the French, for concentrating their forces upon the Danube and capturing Vienna, had gone absolutely to wreck. Vendome, who was to advance through the passes of the Alps from Italy, was obstructed by the brave Tyrolese, who fought most gallantly for their old family sovereign, the emperor, and for their own independence; and he was still further impeded by the now open-avowed defection of the Duke of Savoy, who had made a very profitable treaty with the emperor, England and Holland, the maritime powers agreeing, among other things, to pay him a monthly subsidy of 80,000 crowns. In the mean time, to obviate the strong objections against uniting the crown of Spain with those of Austria and the empire, Leopold and his eldest son, Joseph, renounced their claims to the Spanish succession in favour of the Archduke Charles, the second son of that house. This young prince was accordingly proclaimed king of Spain at Vienna. After the coronation,

the emperor, his father, made preparations to send him to Portugal by way of Holland and England.

About the middle of September the Archduke, or King Charles of Spain, the Indies, &c., set out on his journey. Passing through the territories of the Elector of Hanover, he was met by that prince, and complimented on his accession; at Dusseldorf he was received by the Elector-Palatine and by the Duke of Marlborough. The duke, who was as good a courtier as he was a general, said, "I have just had the honour of putting your Majesty in possession of Limburg." The Catholic king took his sword from his side and gave it to the duke, saying, "I am as yet but a poor prince; I have nothing but my cloak and my sword: the sword may be of use to your grace, and I hope you will not esteem it the worse for my having worn it one day." Marlborough kissed the diamonded hilt, and pledged himself to hazard his life and all that was dear to him, in rendering Charles the greatest prince of Christendom. The king without a kingdom, and the fortunate general, travelled on together to the Hague, where the States received the two with nearly equal honours.

Marlborough hastened over to England on the last day of October, and was presently despatched from court to Portsmouth, to compliment his Majesty of Spain on his happy arrival in the dominions of Queen Anne, and to conduct him to Windsor-castle.

"The king of Spain," says Evelyn, "landing at Portsmouth, came to Windsor, where he was magnificently entertained by the queen, and behaved himself so nobly that everybody was taken with his graceful deportment. After two days, having presented the great ladies and others with very valuable jewels, he went back to Portsmouth, and immediately embarked for Spain."*

Charles well knew the influence possessed by the Duchess of Marlborough over the queen, as well as over her own

* Diary.

illustrious husband, and during his stay at Windsor he treated the lofty beauty—a beauty still, though a grandmother—with studied respect and gallantry. When the duchess, performing her court duty to a royal personage, offered him the basin and ewer, he took them from her fair hands and held them to the queen, and, on returning them to her grace, he presented her with a ring of great value from his own finger.

On opening Parliament, on the 9th of November, the queen delivered a warlike and confident speech. Both houses presented very complacent addresses, assuring her Majesty that they would support her in all her alliances. The Commons agreed that the army should be raised to 58,000 men, and the navy to 40,000 sailors and marines; and they voted with alacrity the necessary supplies. The queen had laid it down as a principle, that the war was to continue until Charles of Austria should be safely seated on the Spanish throne. Before the houses were adjourned, Marlborough was gaining the greatest of all his victories, and immortalizing himself at “Blenheim.”

The fortunate soldier and politician, accepting a pressing invitation from the Pensionary Heinsius, and imitating the famed winter journey of the late king, had left London for the Hague on the 15th of January, while the English Parliament was sitting, and when the season was intensely cold and stormy. He arrived safely at the Hague on the 19th, and, encouraged by the prospect of having 50,000 British troops under his immediate command, he proposed to the Dutch to open the campaigns on the Moselle with his own troops and part of the foreign auxiliaries, while General Auverquerque remained to act on the defensive in the Netherlands with the Dutch and the rest of the auxiliaries. This, in fact, was only part of a bold plan he had formed for carrying the war beyond the Rhine, where the cause of the emperor seemed still falling to ruin; but this part was all he thought fit to confide for

the present to the States-General, whose timidity and irresolution would, he feared, have opposed his daring scheme if they had known the whole of it at once. And there was also another reason, and a weighty one, for this reticence. Somehow, it had generally happened, that when a scheme of operations was laid and produced in the Dutch cabinet, in the allied camp, or in conferences with the ministers of the confederated powers, it was forthwith communicated partially or entire to the court of Versailles, or to the French generals commanding in the field !

At first, the States-General would hardly enter into Marlborough's modified or half-revealed proposal, considering it too hazardous, and as likely to leave Holland too much exposed ; but the pensionary, who had always so ably assisted King William, seconded the proposal, and engaged to employ all his influence, and that of his friends, in procuring the concurrence of his government.

At the same time, Heinsius and Marlborough induced the States to grant a subsidy to the Margrave of Baden, and a supply to the circle of Suabia ; to take into pay 4,000 Wurtemburgers in lieu of 4,000 or 5,000 English and Dutch who had been detached to Portugal, and also to make a promise of money to the Duke of Savoy, with the assurance of so vigorous a campaign on the part of the allies as should effectually prevent the French from sending more troops across the Alps. Under the same influences, fresh encouragements were given to the Elector-Palatine, and to the new King of Prussia, the most selfish and wrong-headed of all the allied princes. This over, Marlborough hurried back to London, where he arrived on the 24th of February, and instantly persuaded the queen to remit a hundred thousand crowns to the circle of Suabia ; and to send, out of her privy purse, some of the money he had promised the Margrave of Baden. Having remodelled his politics so as to square with those of a partly Whig cabinet, Marlborough left London early in April, to put himself at the head of the army. In

spite of all the endeavours of the pensionary and his friends, he encountered considerable opposition even to that part of the plan which he had revealed (the real plan, in its full extent, was still a mystery even in England); the States of Zealand and Friezland in particular, objected strongly to any movements of troops to such a distance from the Low Countries. But at length Marlborough, who had procured a general instruction from the English cabinet empowering him to take such measures as should be deemed proper for relieving the emperor, and reducing the Elector of Bavaria, told the States that he was fully resolved upon going to the Moselle with upwards of 40,000 men. In a letter to Godolphin, he says, "I do no way doubt but her Majesty will approve this: I am very sensible that I take a great deal upon me; but should I act otherwise, the empire will be undone, and, consequently, the confederacy."

The States-General were silenced by his determined declaration, and consented, with a good grace, to what they could not prevent. At the same time, however, they intrusted him with powers which they might and would have withheld if they had known the whole of his hazardous project. The only one of the generals of the allied powers that was intrusted with the secret was Prince Eugene of Savoy, who had been appointed to the command of the emperor's army on the Upper Danube.

It appears, indeed, from the letters written by Eugene to Marlborough (preserved among the Blenheim papers, and in Archdeacon Coxe's copies in the British Museum), and from the *Vie du Prince Eugène* (the latter an equivocal authority, however), that Marlborough had arranged the whole plan of the campaign with that prince, who must, therefore, come in for some of the honours of it. Prince Eugene had induced the emperor to write a letter to Anne, representing his extreme danger, and praying for assistance.

Leaving Auverquerque (or Overkirk) with the Dutch troops, and part of the auxiliaries, to guard the frontiers,

Marlborough proceeded to Utrecht, near which place he passed some days with the Earl of Albemarle, the favourite of the late king, and the depositary of William's secrets and plans. He then went by Ruremond to Maestricht, and thence to Bedburg, in the duchy of Juliers, which had been fixed upon as the place of rendezvous for the forces concentrating from different quarters. Here he found his brother, General Churchill, with fifty-one battalions and ninety-two squadrons of horse. With these troops, which were to be joined on their line of march by Prussians, Hessians, Lunenburgers and others quartered on the Rhine, and by eleven Dutch battalions stationed at Rothwell, Marlborough, on the 19th of May (N. S.) began his celebrated expedition. He had got no farther than Kerpen (on the 20th), when he received an express from Auverquerque, imploring him to halt, because Villeroy had crossed the Meuse at Namur, and was threatening Huy. At the same moment, letters arrived from the Margrave of Baden, urging him to hasten his march towards the lines of Stolhoffen, because Tallard had made a movement towards the Rhine. But Marlborough adhered to his grand project; and, only halting a day to quiet the alarms of Auverquerque and the Margrave of Baden, he pushed forward, might and main, to Kalsecken. At that point he deemed it expedient to disclose more of his plan: he wrote to the States-General to assure them that no danger was to be apprehended on the side of the Netherlands, while his own sudden operations engaged the entire attention of the French; he even ventured to ask for further reinforcements, insisting that Auverquerque would still be strong enough to cover their lines. Then he pushed forward to Sinzig, where he acted as if he intended to make the banks of the Moselle the scene of his campaign. He had not only kept his own design secret, but had established the means of a most rapid communication in all directions, if not a correspondence with some of the allies of the French, who betrayed the movements of Louis's generals.

Upon intelligence that Tallard had passed the Rhine, thrown forward a reinforcement of 10,000 men to the Elector of Bavaria, and then resumed his former position near Strasburg, he accelerated his march, advancing with the cavalry upon Coblenz, and leaving his brother to follow with the infantry and artillery. His progress was favoured by the German people; and on the 26th of May, while visiting the Elector of Treves, who was sojourning in that lofty and romantic citadel, he witnessed from the heights of Ehrenbreitstein the passage of his army across the Moselle and the Rhine. Again, calling urgently upon the States-General for reinforcements, he advanced along the banks of the Rhine to Broubach. The march, though rapid, was admirably conducted, so as to save the troops from the heat of the mid-day sun, and from all unnecessary fatigue. From Broubach he wrote to the King of Prussia (who was wittily and correctly described by his son, the great Frederic, as being a great man in little matters, and a little man in great matters), praising the valour of the Prussian troops, and requesting to have more of them. He arrived at Mentz on the 29th, and rested there a day to refresh the troops and to partake of the hospitality of the elector. The army was fresh, and in such admirable order and *tenue*, that the elector exclaimed, "These gentlemen seem to be all dressed for a ball."*

While at Mentz, Marlborough received advices that the States had consented to send after him twenty squadrons

* Journal of Dr. Hare, Marlborough's chaplain and most confidential friend. This diary is full, to all appearance very correct, and certainly exceedingly amusing. Archdeacon Coxe made good use of it, but it has never been published as a whole: a MS. copy of the original, at Blenheim, is in the library of the British Museum. Marlborough spent very large sums of money to keep up that neatness in the army which excited the astonishment not only of the elector, but of every foreigner who saw our troops. It is necessary that this free expenditure should be borne in mind by the reader.

and eight battalions of Danish auxiliaries; but at the same moment he received the less welcome intelligence that the Margrave of Baden, to whom he had made his mistress send money out of the privy-purse, had not only suffered the 10,000 men that Tallard had thrown forward, to reinforce the Elector of Bavaria, but had also neglected a most favourable opportunity of bringing that elector to battle. In fact 30,000 German troops, of different circles, had permitted the Elector of Bavaria to move from his camp at Ulm, towards the head of the Danube, to meet the French forwarded by Tallard; had allowed the elector to pass unmolested through the narrow defiles—to march, in a manner, right through the main body of the imperialists—to effect his junction with the French, and thence to return through the narrow and dangerous pass of Stochach with a long line of carriages; whereas, by seizing that pass, these Germans might have cut off the elector's retreat, and reduced him to surrender at discretion, his army being without bread, so that any delay or stoppage must have been fatal to it. Marlborough, however, did not lose heart: he persuaded the Landgrave of Hesse to put his artillery at his disposal; summoned several of the auxiliary or partisan leaders to receive his instructions as to the proper points where they were to join him; took up money to pay the English, “who, notwithstanding the continual marching, were extremely pleased with this expedition”; and moved towards the Neckar, where he had previously ordered bridges to be constructed.

He had already saved the emperor from all fears of the Elector of Bavaria and his French allies; but, hoping to achieve much more than this, he was now directing his steps to the banks of the Danube, leaving the French in his rear, lost in astonishment, and too weak and too indifferently commanded to be able to do anything but look on. They, indeed, were still uncertain as to his real intentions: at first they had expected an attack by the

Moselle; then upon Alsace; his throwing a bridge over the Rhine at Philipsberg, and the advance of the Landgrave of Hesse's artillery to Mannheim, seemed to indicate the siege of Landau, which place had been retaken by the French, and much improved in its fortifications. The French generals were at last completely bewildered.

If the Condés and the Turennes had been alive, affairs might have gone differently; but Marlborough's genius was opposed by the mediocrity of Villeroi and Tallard. The first of these generals, who had followed him at a respectful distance from the Meuse, brought up reinforcements from French Flanders.* Tallard, on the other hand, descended to Lauter, with a view of joining Villeroi, so as to protect Alsace. They were thus at fault, when Marlborough crossed the Neckar, and proceeded to Erpingen, with a force continually increasing, by means of small bodies of Prussians, Hessians, Palatines, and others who flowed into his line of march, right and left, like tributary streams to a main river. On the 7th of June he encamped at Erpingen, to wait for his brother, who was several marches behind him with the cannon and part of the infantry. On that day he wrote to Godolphin:—"Having received intelligence yesterday, that in three or four days the Duke of Villeroi, with his army, would join that of the Marshal de Tallard about Landau, in order to force the passage of the Rhine, I prevailed with Count Wratislaw to make all the haste he could to Prince Louis of Baden's army, where he will be this night, that he might make him sensible of the great consequence it is to hinder the French from passing that river, while we are acting against the Elector of Bavaria. I have also desired him to press, and not to be refused, that either Prince Louis or Prince Eugene go

* "Marshal Villeroi," says Voltaire, "who had wished to follow him on his first marches, suddenly lost sight of him altogether, and only learned where he really was on hearing of his victory at Donawert."
—*Siècle de Louis XIV.*

immediately to the Rhine. I am in hopes to know tomorrow what resolution they have taken. If I could decide it by my wishes, Prince Eugene should stay on the Danube, although Prince Louis has assured me, by the Count de Frise, that he will not make the least motion with his army but as we shall concert. At this time it is agreed that Prince Louis shall act on the Iller, and I on the Danube. If the Marshal de Villeroi can be kept on the other side of the Rhine, we must be contented to suffer him to do what he pleases there, whilst we are acting in Bavaria. If we can hinder the junction of more troops to the elector, I hope six weeks after we begin may be sufficient for the reducing of him, or the entire ruining of his country.”*

Marlborough's rest at Erpingen was very short. On the 9th of June, he crossed the Neckar, in another part of its course, and advanced to Mondelsheim, where, on the 10th, he met, for the first time, Prince Eugene of Savoy, the partner, rather than the rival of his glory. These two names will be inseparable in history, and a memoir of Marlborough must be considered as incomplete if it be left without some biographical sketch of Eugene; instead of interrupting the narrative of this rapid campaign, in which our troops were brought up with unusual and astonishing regularity and despatch, we will reserve such sketches, as well as notices of other commanders in the field, for a future page.

Many compliments passed between the two accomplished commanders; and, at their first interview, Marlborough and Eugene conceived for each other that esteem and confidence which lasted through life, and which, in a marvellous degree, rode triumphantly over every feeling of envy and jealousy. The next day, they marched together to Hippach, where they halted three days, to await the arrival of infantry and artillery, who were still far behind, and to concert their future operations, which could fully succeed only by an

* Archdeacon Coxe. General Sir G. Murray's Letters and Despatches.

entire understanding and cordial co-operation. The prince bestowed great praise on the English horse, which had not usually been considered the best part of our armies.

At Hippach, Marlborough reviewed his cavalry in the presence of Eugene, "who expressed his surprise to find them in such excellent condition after so long a march, and told his grace that he had heard much of the English cavalry, and found it to be the best appointed and the finest he had ever seen. 'But,' says he, 'money (which you do not want in England) will buy fine clothes and fine horses, but it cannot buy that lively air which I see in every one of those troopers' faces.' To which his grace replied, that that must be attributed to their heartiness in the common cause, and the particular pleasure and satisfaction they had in seeing his highness." *

The Margrave of Baden, after detaching 9,000 Prussians to secure the passage of the Rhine against Villeroi, came up and joined at Hippach, where he saluted Marlborough as "the deliverer of the empire." Alluding to his own recent failure, he added, "you will assist me in vindicating my honour, which has been lowered in public opinion." The courteous conciliating Englishman could not be wanting in attention to so proud and punctilious a prince as the Margrave; and he replied, with infinite grace, "I am here to learn of your highness how to save the empire. None but those who are deficient in judgment can undervalue the merit of the Prince of Baden, who has not only preserved the empire, but enlarged its boundaries."

Of necessity, this obstinate old man, who, in spite of blundering, had once gained a brilliant victory over the Turks, on the Danube, and who in the end died "little esteemed, and little lamented,"† was admitted into the councils and secret deliberations of Marlborough and Eugene; and from that moment, there arose differences,

* Hare's MS. Journal.

† Bishop Burnet's History of his Own Times.

jealousies, and intrigues, which might have deranged the whole of the beautifully-concerted plan of operations. Marlborough, as we have seen, wished the Margrave to remain on the Rhine, and to have Prince Eugene as his colleague on the Danube, where the brilliant and decisive part of the campaign was to be enacted ; but the Margrave, who was older in rank than Prince Eugene, and unwilling to be kept in an inferior field of action, insisted on a right of choice, and, in fact, on a right of supreme command on the Danube ; and it was not without difficulty that the obstinate German consented to share that command by alternate days with the English general. Both by Prince Eugene and Count Wratislaw, Marlborough had been forewarned of the captious temper and wayward, perverse disposition of the Margrave ; thus, he had previously put on an armour of proof of patience and gentleness ; but, proof as it was, that armour, more than once, was nearly riven. It is not probable that any other commanding officer could have borne what he bore ; but Marlborough's sweetness of temper was altogether marvellous. In the end he wrote to Godolphin, that Prince Eugene had assured him that the emperor, his master, would not suffer the Margrave to do harm, either by his temper, or by want of good inclination to the cause ; and Marlborough added, " After I have said this, I must do him the justice, that I think he will do well ; for he must be *a devil*, after what he has promised, if he does otherwise."*

Greatly to the mortification of these two great generals, Eugene was for the present left upon the Rhine, while Marlborough moved towards the Danube with the Margrave. At the same time news was received that Overkirk had been baffled in an attempt upon the French lines in Flanders, and had lost an excellent opportunity upon the Meuse. Nor was this all the unfavourable intelligence : there were misfortunes nearer at hand ; for some Prussian

* Letter as given from the original by Coxe.

and Suabian corps, appointed to join between the Rhine and the Danube, mistook their instructions and lost ten days in silly marches and counter-marches. Marlborough, however, went on to Ebersbach, where he rested two days.

At Ebersbach Count Wratislaw waited upon him, in the name of his master the emperor, who was "desirous to write to the queen, that he might have her consent to make the duke a prince of the empire, which he would do by creating some land he had in the empire into a principality, which would give him a privilege of being in the college or diet, with the sovereign princes of the empire." Marlborough declared he must first know the will of his queen, and that, in his opinion, no such honours ought to be conferred upon him until the fate of the war should be decided.

On the 15th of June, Prince Eugene was at Philipsberg on the Rhine; and Marlborough, still hampered by the delays and mistakes of his allies, was preparing to cross the range of mountains which separated him from the valley of the Danube. And, just at this moment, the States-General, alarmed by reports that Marshal Villeroi was returning to the Netherlands, earnestly reclaimed a portion of the auxiliary forces which were serving with the English, while news also arrived that the Elector of Bavaria, after sending his baggage to Ulm, was pushing his army across the Danube with the intention of falling upon the advanced forces of the Margrave of Baden.

To tranquillize the States, Marlborough issued orders for the collection of a sufficient number of boats to facilitate the return of a large body of troops down the Rhine; to facilitate his own advance to the Danube, he ordered the formation of magazines at Heidelberg and Nordlingen (for never was commander more careful of his commissariat, or more determined to provide the means of keeping his troops well fed, and so preventing the excesses of living at free quarter on the people of the country); he enjoined some Danish foot, who had reached Frankfort, to make haste and join

Prince Eugene; and he pressed his brother, General Churchill, who had arrived with the infantry at Blockingen, to hasten his progress. His active correspondence calls to our mind that of Lord Wellington during the busiest part of the Peninsular war. In both, the brevity and simplicity of style, the attention to every important particular, and the straightforward business-like manner are the same. Marching and fighting formed the least portion of Marlborough's work: the pen was hardly ever out of his hand.

It was not till the 20th of June that everything was ready, and that Marlborough could lead forward the cavalry and auxiliaries to the aid of the Margrave. The weather had been bad for some days, and heavy drenching rains (like those which afterwards fell at Waterloo) continued to descend during the march. To get across the mountains the troops had to go through the narrow and difficult pass of Gieslingen. "There is," says the duke's chaplain, "a continued defile, of about two English miles, which would take up almost a day's time in the best season of the year to pass with any number of troops; but it was much more difficult now, because of the excessive rains which had fallen for the last three or four days together, and had so filled up the rivulets and deepened the roads, that they would have been thought altogether impassable by any but such as were carried on by an invincible resolution."* Without let or hindrance, loss or any kind of accident, Marlborough got through this pass of Gieslingen; and on the 22nd he came in communication with the troops of the Margrave, who had taken up the position near Westerteten.

The following day was spent in reviewing the troops and forming a new line of battle. On the 24th, Marlborough and the confederates advanced to Elchingen, close on the Danube, thus compelling the Elector of Bavaria to withdraw from Ulm. On the 25th, amid torrents of rain,

* Dr. Hare's MS. Journal.

Marlborough fixed his head-quarters at Langenau. Here we find him sympathizing with the sufferings of his poor soldiers, of whose comfort, in every way, he was always most chary. Writing on the 25th to his duchess he says, "As I was never more sensible of heat in my life than I was a fortnight ago, we have now the other extremity of cold; for as I am writing I am forced to have fire in the stove in my chamber. But the poor men, that have not such conveniences, I am afraid will suffer from these continued rains. Yet as they do us hurt here, they do good to Prince Eugene on the Rhine, so that we must take the bad with the good."

The Elector of Bavaria was now retiring along the bank of the Danube to an entrenched camp, constructed by himself and his French allies in the preceding campaign, between Lawingen and Dillingen, having broad morasses in front, and the Danube in the rear. On the following day (the 26th of June) Marlborough moved forward, and halted on the little river Brentz, only two short leagues from the enemy.

At this time the ill-omened predictions were loudly renewed in London. Marlborough had rushed like a madman to the distant banks of the Danube, and would never return to give an account of his lost army! The irresistible French would have their own way in the Netherlands, in Holland, in Spain, in Italy, and all over Europe! England would soon be invaded, and the restored house of Stuart would bring back with them popery and persecution, tyranny and scaffolds! So went the alarm note in England—a note not always sincere, but maliciously meant to injure the great commander—when Marlborough calmly wrote to his wife, "It is not only by yours, but by others, that I find that there are several people who would be glad of my not having success in this undertaking. I am very confident, without flattering myself, that it was the only thing capable of saving us

from ruin, so that whatever the success may be, I shall have the inward satisfaction to know that I have done all that was in my power, and that none can be angry with me for the undertaking, but such as wish ill to their country and their religion; and with such I am not desirous of friendship.”*

His brother, General Churchill, did not arrive with the artillery and the English foot until the 27th. He reviewed them as they passed to take their post in the lines, and expressed his high gratification at seeing that their recent fatigues had not affected their health and gallant bearing. His combined army now amounted to ninety-six battalions and 202 squadrons, with a train of forty-eight pieces of artillery, pontoons, &c. None of the expected forces were wanting except some Danish horse, under the Duke of Wurtemberg; but Marlborough did not think himself able to act as he could wish against the Elector of Bavaria until that Danish cavalry came up.

But other and more weighty considerations arose. While he was waiting, the elector and the skilful French officers serving with him threw up fresh works in front of their entrenched camp on the bank of the Danube, and detached General d'Arco with 12,000 men to occupy the Schellenberg, a commanding height overhanging the important town of Donawert. Marlborough saw clearly that by these dispositions the elector hoped to cover his own dominions, and keep the allies in check till he should receive reinforcements, every day expected from France: he therefore insisted that the heights of Schellenberg should be immediately attacked, representing to those who suggested timid doubts, that if time were lost the enemy would either escape, or have leisure to make on those heights an entrenched camp more formidable than the one they were occupying among the morasses. “Either the enemy will escape,” said he, “or they will have time to finish their

* Coxé.

works. In the latter case, the delay of every single hour will cost us the loss of 1,000 men.”*

The Margrave of Baden vacillated and hesitated ; but at last consented to an advance : and, on the 1st of July, when Marlborough had the command for the day, he defiled before the elector in his marshy camp, and directed his course towards the foot of the Schellenberg. The roads were little better than bogs, the horses frequently sunk to their saddle-girths, the artillery and heavy luggage wagons stuck in the mud, and the march was altogether slow and most laborious. Yet towards evening Marlborough rested on a convenient plain a few miles from the foot of the hills, from whose summit the Gallo-Bavarians were watching his progress with evident uneasiness.

“ The march concludes,—the various realms are past ;
The immortal Schellenberg appears at last !
Like hills the aspiring ramparts rise on high,—
Like valleys at their feet the trenches lie ;
Batteries on batteries guard each fatal pass.”†

Gazing on those heights, and foreseeing that they would not be carried without great bloodshed, the duke gave orders for establishing an hospital for his wounded, an attention not as yet generally bestowed by commanders on suffering humanity. He also took 130 picked men from each battalion of the army ; joined these, which collectively amounted to 6,000 foot, to thirty squadrons of horse, and three regiments of Austrian grenadiers ; and ordered that the detachment should precede the main body of the army and begin the attack. At three o'clock in the morning, as the first rays of the sun began to light up the Danube, the plain, and the mountain, this column was put in motion by Marlborough in person, who, at five o'clock, followed with the rest of the army.‡

* Coxe.

† Addison—The Campaign.

‡ Dr. Hare's Journal.

There remained to be crossed, at about a mile from the foot of the Schellenberg, the Wernitz, a deep and rapid stream flowing from the Danube; but bridges had been prepared to throw across, and the van was provided with pontoons and fascines.

It was about nine o'clock when Marlborough joined the head of the attacking column, on the bank of this stream, where he was saluted by the enemy with a heavy cannonade, whence he could see the very formidable nature of the attack he contemplated.

The Schellenberg was rough and steep; the summit was covered with troops, and protected by an old fort, and by entrenchments, which, though not completed, were in a rapid progress;* and, besides all this, there lay between him and the summit a thick wood, a rivulet, and a ravine; while on the opposite side of the Danube there was a regular camp, occupied by a strong detachment of cavalry, who could communicate with the town of Donawert and the acclivities of the Schellenberg by a bridge.

About noon, Marlborough, without waiting for the Imperialists, who were still in the rear, crossed the Wernitz, and at about five in the afternoon he gave his last orders to the attacking columns, the command of which was consigned to the Dutch General Goor, and the first line of which was led by a forlorn hope of fifty English grenadiers, under Lord Mordaunt. The assailants advanced to the hill with a firm step, under a tremendous fire from the enemy's works. As soon as they arrived within the range

* "The Schellenberg is about two English miles in circumference at the base. At the top there is a large flat, about half a mile over, where the enemy were encamped in several lines. It joins to Donawert upon the south, from the outworks of which town an entrenchment began, which was carried round the top of the hill for almost two English miles, till it joined the Danube on the other side: there, and all along the north side, the entrenchment was very strong, and most regular."—Dr. Hare's Journal.

of grape-shot, the carnage became dreadful. General Goor and other officers fell, and for a moment the men paused and hung back ; but other officers stepped forward to supply the places of those who had fallen, and then the column moved forward till they came to the ravine, which some of the men, in their ignorance, mistook for the ditch of the entrenchment, which could be made passable by the fascines they carried. While they were throwing in their fascines, standing exposed on the edge of the ravine, General d'Arco plied them with every gun he could bring to bear upon them ; and when this tremendous fire had produced great effect, he threw out some French and Bavarian battalions, who, rushing from their works, charged with the bayonet. This charge was repulsed principally by a battalion of the English guards, who stood their ground almost alone, and kept in perfect order, though nearly all their officers had been knocked on the head before the charge began.*

The attacking column soon formed again, and advanced still nearer to the works ; but d'Arco concentrated nearly his whole force in their front, by drawing in the men that had occupied the flanks ; and he not only continued to ply the assailants with grape-shot, but sent out beyond his trenches several strong sallying parties, who fought bravely, and used both musket and bayonet with great effect. Again the allies began to waver and give way ; and their repulse seemed complete, when General Lumley led forward a body of horse, threw back the enemy, and closed up, or re-formed the ranks of the allies.

During their severe sufferings, the French and Bavarians had not escaped tremendous loss : of some of the parties that sallied from the trenches scarcely a man had returned ; and at this critical moment, the accidental explosion of some gunpowder in their works, spread a sudden panic, which could not be overcome in the shortness of time that

* Dr. Hare's Journal.

was allowed them. For the next moment, the English and the Dutch burst into the entrenchments, and the imperialists, led on by the Margrave of Baden, were seen advancing towards the heights, from under the walls of Donawert. While the English and the Dutch were, as yet, part in the ditch,* and part scaling the entrenchment, the French and Bavarians, abandoning every part of the work, fled in complete disorder down the hill-side, towards the bridge over the Danube. The fugitives were closely followed by the whole force of the allied cavalry, and the carnage was terrific; and when the unhappy fugitives reached the bridge, it broke down under their weight, and hundreds of them were drowned: other bodies were driven over the bank into the rapid stream; and in the end, between the sword and the Danube, 7,000 or 8,000 perished on that fatal evening. Of the whole force detached to Schellenberg, only 3,000 men rejoined the elector; but a considerable number came in, as deserters, to the allies. Sixteen pieces of artillery and all the tents were taken.

The night set in with a heavy rain; and, in spite of the shouts of triumph, the allied camp presented a sight of woe and horror: there were 4,000 men wounded, and, at the very least, 1,500 slain.

“How many generous Britons meet their doom,
To march where Britons never march’d before.

* * * * *

After such toils o’ercome, such dangers past,
Stretch’d on Bavarian ramparts breathe their last.”†

The loss of the allies in officers was particularly heavy; eight generals, eleven colonels, and twenty-six captains, being among the slain; and the Prince of Verberu and Count Styrum being mortally wounded. Of the generals slain, two were Dutch, namely, Goor and Beinheim. Marl-

* The regiment of dragoons, under the command of the brave Lord John Hay, dismounted to aid the infantry in the entrenchments.

† Addison—The Campaign.

borough particularly regretted the loss of Goor, who was brave, skilful in military affairs, and faithful and steady in political ones. The Margrave of Baden himself received a contusion in the foot. The sufferings of the wounded soldiers were, of course, much aggravated by the state of the weather; but Marlborough, who had made preparations for them, now paid all possible attention to their comfort.* This over, he left a considerable body to keep possession of the Schellenberg, and withdrew to his camp on the Wernitz, attributing his success to the particular blessing of God, and the unparalleled bravery of her Majesty's troops.†

Marlborough's accounts of his own battles (like Wellington's) are always remarkably concise. For this battle of Schellenberg we have followed almost exclusively the account given by Dr. Hare, which was submitted to the duke and approved by him. Mr. Secretary Harley, shortly after the event, wrote to Cardonnel, the duke's secretary, for a relation of this campaign. Cardonnel replied, "You may please to be informed that his grace has committed the care of it to one of our chaplains, an ingenious gentleman, who has the use of my books, and will be very exact in every particular. His grace takes the pains to peruse the journal himself."‡ This knowledge gives the greatest value to Dr. Hare's performance.

The victory produced a deep and lasting impression all over Europe. Burnet, who was in the closest relations with the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, says briefly, "The duke joined the Prince of Baden and the imperial

* Besides preparing the military hospitals beforehand, the duke had written to the magistrates and inhabitants of Nordlingen to request them to provide all manner of necessaries. The wounded of an army had never before been so well cared for.

† See his note to the queen, immediately after the victory, in Archdeacon Coxe's *Memoirs*.

‡ Sir George Murray's *Letters and Despatches*.

army in the beginning of July, and after a long march continued from three in the morning, they came up to the Bavarian troops towards the evening. They were so well posted that our men were repulsed in the three first attacks with great loss: at last the enemy were beaten from their posts, which was followed by a total rout, and we became masters of their camp, their artillery, and their baggage. Their general, d'Arco, with many others, swam over the Danube; others got into Donawert, which they abandoned next morning with that precipitation, that they were not able to execute the elector's cruel orders, which were to set fire to the town, if they should be forced to abandon it. Great quantities of straw were laid in many places as a preparation in case of a misfortune. The best half of the Bavarian forces were entirely routed, about 5,000 of them were killed or wounded. *We lost as many, for the action was very hot, and our men were much exposed; yet they went still on, and continued the attack with such resolution, that it let the generals see how much they might depend on the courage of their soldiers.*"*

Those in England who would still believe that the French were invincible, and the resources of Louis XIV. inexhaustible, of course said that very little had been gained by this victory, and that Marlborough must soon retreat with a great loss, or capitulate to the Elector of Bavaria and the French marshals.

After this battle of Schellenberg or *Donawert*, as it is variously called, fresh misunderstandings broke out between the English general and the Margrave of Baden. The German general had been slightly wounded in the engagement, and had entered the entrenchments before Marlborough came up in person; hence the margrave and his friends claimed for him the chief honour of the victory, regardless of the obvious facts, that the whole plan was

* History of his Own Times.

the English general's, and that, without the decided will of Marlborough, there would have been no battle at all. Marlborough, on the other side, spoke with some contempt of his colleague. A feud was the consequence, which spread from the army, where it might have proved very dangerous, to the Low Countries and the Hague, where the party inimical to Marlborough struck a medal with the effigies of the margrave on the one side and the lines of Schellenberg on the reverse, to commemorate the victory. But the world at large took a juster view of the case, and of the relative merits of the two commanders: through Germany, throughout Italy, in every part of the continent, by friends and by foes, the merit of the achievement was given to Anne's general, and the name of Marlborough was on every man's tongue. Even the French began to sing him in songs, and the Italians, farther off, dreamed of him as of some fierce conqueror of the old times.

The Duke of Shrewsbury, in a congratulatory letter from Rome, where he was residing, says, "I will not suspend your time with politic reflections, which you can make much better than I, but must tell you that in this holy, ignorant city, they have an idea of you as of a Tamerlane; and, had I a picture of old Colonel Birch with his whiskers, I would put it off for yours, and change it for one done by Raphael."

At Vienna the benefit of his services was acknowledged with transports of gratitude. Stepney, a very minor poet, but a respectable diplomatist, wrote from the Austrian capital to Mr. Secretary Harley:—"The whole court is quite changed, and the young king of the Romans, even on his way to chapel, broke through the severe rules of Austrian etiquette, to testify his exultation to the British minister."*

The emperor, the phlegmatic Leopold, wrote thus warmly to the duke himself—

"Nothing can be more glorious than the celerity and

* Letter in State-paper Office, as quoted by Archdeacon Coxe.

vigour with which, after the junction of your army and mine, you forced the camp of the enemy at Donawert; since my generals and ministers declare that the success of the enterprise, which is most acceptable and opportune to me, was chiefly owing to your counsels, prudence, and conduct, as well as to the bravery of the troops who fought under your command. . . . This will be an eternal trophy to your most serene queen in Upper Germany, whither the victorious arms of the English nation have never penetrated since the memory of man.”*

But Marlborough had more serious thoughts to occupy his mind than these courtly compliments. Marshal Villeroi had promised the Elector of Bavaria that he would send him, by way of the Black Forest, fifty battalions of foot and sixty squadrons of horse—“the best troops of France, which would make him stronger than the confederates.” The English general, however, relied much on the assurance of Prince Eugene, that he would venture everything rather than suffer these French to pass quietly, as their last reinforcements had done. Moreover, the Elector of Bavaria, not being able to keep his present ground, set fire to his magazines, abandoned his fortified camp and all his positions, and commenced a disorderly retreat towards Augsburg, thus leaving his hereditary dominions open to invasion.

On the 6th of July, only four days after the battle of Schellenberg, Marlborough wrote to Godolphin: “We are now taking care for a passage over the river Lech, and then we shall be in the heart of the elector’s country. If he will ever make propositions, it must be then. The Marshals de Villeroi and Tallard are separated. The latter is to join the Elector of Bavaria, and the Duke of Villeroi is to act on the Rhine. Prince Eugene will be obliged to divide his army, so that he may observe each of their motions. As

* Letter, from the original in the Blenheim Papers, as translated by Coxe.

for his person, it will be with that army that is to observe M. Tallard. By all the intelligence we have, our last action has very much disheartened the enemy, so that, if we can get over the river to engage them, I no ways doubt but God will help us with the victory. Our greatest difficulty is, that of making our bread follow us; *for the troops that I have the honour to command cannot subsist without it, and the Germans, that are used to starve, cannot advance without us.*"*

On the very next day, the 7th of July, the passage of the deep, broad, and rapid river Lech was effected at Gunderkingen, with great ability and without disaster, the pontoons being laid by Colonel Cadogan, an officer of great merit. That same evening, part of the army took post near the opposite bank. Upon this, the Bavarian garrison at Neuburg abandoned that important place, and retired to Ingoldstadt. By the 10th, the whole of the allied army was across the Lech and encamped between Standa and Mittelstetten, their force amounting to 73 battalions and 174 squadrons. Marlborough was now at rest as to the subsistence of his troops; "for," as he wrote to Godolphin, "it is now easy for us to have all our provisions for the army from the circle of Franconia." To his wife he wrote, "I should not trouble you with this, but that I am extremely pleased to let you know, that I have it now in my power that the poor soldiers shall not want bread."†

He was also greatly rejoiced at being now free from the control of the Dutch field-deputies and the antiquated and obstinate Dutch generals—

"Old captains and dictators of their race,"

who appear to have almost constantly opposed everything that was new, quick, or daring in war.

* Marlborough Despatches, edited by the late General Sir George Murray. Archdeacon Coxe's Memoirs. Pictorial History of England, vol. iv.

† Letters in Archdeacon Coxe's Memoirs.

The strong conjugal and domestic affections of our great commander must not be passed unnoticed. At this most busy time, he writes to the duchess, who had been ill, "I conjure you not to neglect taking advice, and doing what may be proper for preventing it in future; for if you will make me happy now, you must live long, and not have melancholy thoughts of what is past (the death of their only son), for I do assure you, I place all my hopes in ending my days quietly with you, and to be contented with the children that it has pleased God to continue to us. . . . Pray, tell my dear children, that I hope, in ten days time, to have so much leisure as to write to them."

With the idea of retarding, for some short time, the advance of the confederates, the Elector of Bavaria had thrown a weak garrison into the town of Rain. Marlborough ordered a halt; and, while the heavy artillery was being brought up, he devoted infinite attention to the collecting of provisions and establishing magazines, and the opening of communications with the country beyond the Danube. At the same time, he sent down thirty squadrons to Prince Eugene, the better to enable that vigilant and active commander to stop the onward march of the French reinforcements. The garrison at Rain fled on the near approach of the allies. Marlborough had now the whole of his army, with the exception of detachments, in the enemy's country; and, as the elector continued obstinate, he announced that he would do his utmost to ruin his country. "This," said he, "is so contrary to my nature, that nothing but absolute necessity could have obliged me to consent to it; for these poor people suffer only for their master's ambition. There having been no war in this country for above sixty years, the towns and villages are so clean and pretty, that you would be pleased with them. . . . You will, I hope, believe me, that my nature suffers when I see so many fine places burnt, and

that must be burnt, if the elector will not hinder it. I shall never be easy and happy till I am quiet with you.”*

It appears that the whole country was scoured and harrowed as far as the walls of Munich, the capital city. The elector must have seen much of the mischief with his own eyes, for his entrenched camp at Augsburg was within view of the allied camp; but he still relied confidently on French succour. Munich would have been reduced had not the Margrave of Baden broken the promise he had made, to furnish adequate artillery and stores for the siege. On the 31st of July, he wrote to Godolphin: “For want of cannon, and owing to the King of France doing all he can to succour the elector, we shall be obliged to take such measures as our wants will permit us; but you may be assured, if they give us any opportunity, we shall be glad to come to battle; for that would decide the whole, because our troops are so very good. But our misfortune is, that we want everything for besieging towns; otherwise this letter would have been dated from Munich.”

Without battering cannon, and without money, Marlborough was glad to receive at last some propositions from the elector. Though unwillingly, the emperor’s ambassador entered into these preliminaries, engaging to obtain for the elector the restoration of his dominions and a subsidy of 200,000 crowns, upon condition of his entirely breaking off from the French, and furnishing 12,000 men to the emperor and his allies. But Villeroi’s assurances, and Marshal Tallard’s advance, revived the spirit of the Bavarian prince, and the treaty fell to the ground. It is more than probable that the elector had never been sincere, and that all that he had aimed at had been merely the gaining of time.

Tallard, with his 35,000 Frenchmen, got through the Black Forest, and after losing five days in a fruitless and absurd attempt on Villingen, forded the Danube at Mos-

* Letters to the Duchess, as given by Archdeacon Coxe.

kirk, and emerged into the plains about Ulm: he then struck away to the north-west, and by a few rapid marches came into communication with the electoral army which continued to hold its ground at Augsburg. Prince Eugene, too weak to prevent these movements, made a parallel march from the Rhine, and reached the plains of Hochstadt with 18,000 men, nearly at the same time in which Tallard effected his junction with the Bavarians. Eugene was still far apart from Marlborough and the rest of the confederates; he was precisely in that position in which a great commander would have crushed him by a concentrated attack, and then have marched away with his men, flushed with victory, to attack Marlborough. The confederates were, in fact, in that very situation into which the Austrians, at a later period, so often and so fatally fell, and in which Napoleon Buonaparte gained his greatest successes over them. But Tallard had none of this genius and decision—the opportunity was thrown away upon him; and Marlborough and Eugene were left to exercise their superior stratagem and abilities, and to join their separate armies in one compact and formidable mass.*

Marlborough fell back upon Neuburg, and on the 6th of August encamped on the Paar, near Schrobenhausen. Here Prince Eugene, who had left his army for a few hours, galloped into the camp, unknown, and almost alone, to concert measures with the English commander.

The names of these two great commanders, who were now for the first time to fight side by side, will be for ever inseparable in history. Prince Eugene was three years

* Tallard, however, was a veteran officer, and had served under Condé and the great Turenne; he was a lieutenant-general as early as 1693. In 1697 he had been in England as ambassador from Louis XIV. to William III.; in 1702 he was appointed to the command of the French army on the Rhine, and was honoured with the marshal's staff. He had defeated the Imperialists before Landau, and had taken that place. His reputation stood very high until he came in contact with Marlborough.

younger than the duke, having been born in 1653. He was paternally descended from the ducal house of Savoy, but was a French subject by birth, being a younger son of the Count of Soissons by one of the nieces of Cardinal Mazarin. Moreover, the place of his birth was Paris. His father intended him for the church, but he himself resolved to be a soldier. Being in his younger days, of a thin, fragile figure, Louis XIV. refused him a regiment—one of the greatest mistakes he ever committed. The ardent young soldier received some slights from Louvois, the French minister of war, and his thorough alienation from the country of his birth was completed afterwards by Louis's ill treatment of his relative the Duke of Savoy. Having renounced all allegiance to France, Eugene entered the service of the Emperor Leopold. Louvois declared that he should never again set his foot within the kingdom. "I will re-enter France in spite of him," said the young prince, who kept his word. At a subsequent period the French court made him many offers, but could never induce him to take service. His first campaign was against the Turks at the celebrated siege of Vienna in 1683. He was there when the siege was raised by the prompt arrival of John Sobieski, King of Poland. In 1688-9, he was sent by the emperor on a diplomatic mission to the Duke of Savoy, and in 1691 he was appointed to the command of the imperial forces in Piedmont, that were assisting his relative Victor Amadeus II. against the French. He already displayed great generalship, and it was chiefly through his means that the Duke of Savoy was enabled nobly to maintain the struggle. In 1697 he commanded the emperor's army in Hungary, and gained a splendid and decisive victory over the Turks at Zenta, on the river Theiss. At the opening of the war of succession he was appointed to the command of the imperial army in Italy, and there, for two years, he had gloriously contended with inferior forces against the French and their successive commanders, Ca-

tinat, Villeroy, and Vendome. At the end of 1702, he returned to Vienna, and was made President of the Council of War. He had now quitted that post to join Marlborough and partake in the glories of Blenheim. His experience and military genius were great, and his personal valour was, perhaps, still greater. He would have delighted to head every charge he ordered. His favourite reading was "Plutarch's Lives"; that of Marlborough, the historical plays of Shakspeare. Intimacy increased the mutual affection and esteem of these illustrious men.

At present, their first resolutions appear to have been to get rid of the conflicting voice and authority of the Margrave of Baden, who, very fortunately, consented to go with twenty-three battalions and thirty-seven squadrons to lay siege to Ingoldstadt, a virgin fortress, the possession of which was indispensable to the confederates, if they meant to keep their footing in Bavaria. On the 8th of August, Marlborough and Eugene approached the bridges laid down near the confluence of the Lech and the Danube; and, on the morrow, upon intelligence that the united Gallo-Bavarians were coming on, Marlborough's forces advanced to Exheim. At this last point Eugene left the duke to bring up his own 18,000 men. But in an hour or two, the prince galloped back to apprise Marlborough that the enemy were in full march towards Dillingen, in the evident design of crossing the Danube and overwhelming his (Eugene's) little army. Upon this, Eugene's troops were ordered to fall back, and the mass of the forces of Marlborough were put in motion to recross the Danube, so as to be on the same side of the river with their allies, and to join Eugene's force as quickly as possible.

This operation was exceedingly difficult. Marlborough had to traverse the Aicha, the Lech, and the Wernitz, as well as the Danube, and all these streams were swollen by the recent rains, and our supply of pontoons was defective.

The operation, however, was conducted with admirable

skill and forethought, and by the 10th Marlborough had pitched his camp between Mittelstadt and Peuchingen, having, to quiet the alarms of the Margrave of Baden, engaged to cover the siege of Ingoldstadt. On the evening of the 10th, he threw across the Danube twenty battalions and twenty-eight squadrons to reinforce Prince Eugene, who was now at Donawert, under the Schellenberg, and ready to move with his whole army as soon as he should be certain that the Elector of Bavaria and the French marshal had crossed the Danube with their whole army. In a letter to Godolphin Marlborough wrote, "When Prince Eugene and I shall have joined, our army will consist of one hundred and sixty squadrons and sixty-five battalions The French make their boast of having a great superiority, but I am very confident they will not venture a battle. Yet if we find a fair occasion we shall be glad to embrace it." As he was retiring in the night for a short rest, which his wearied frame much required, Eugene announced, by express, that the enemy had crossed the Danube in force, and that he stood in need of instant succour. The prince had posted his infantry within d'Arco's old position on the heights of the Schellenberg, with orders to repair the entrenchments; his baggage he had left at Donawert, and he himself, supported by the Duke of Wurtemberg, was endeavouring to maintain himself on the Kessel. Not a moment was to be lost, as the heads of the Gallo-Bavarian columns were already in sight.

At midnight Marlborough ordered General Churchill, who had already crossed the Danube, to make all haste to join Eugene, and within two hours the whole of the main army was in motion, crossing the river at different points, with horses, artillery, ammunition wagons, and all the heavy *attirail* of war. It was, however, ten o'clock at night of the 11th before the junction with Eugene was completed. Then the combined armies encamped with the Danube on their left, and the Kessel in their front, beyond which small

stream General Rowe was posted with some of the English guards.

At the dawn of day (the 12th) Marlborough's baggage and artillery all came up. At the same moment the English guards moved in the direction of Schweningen, Marlborough and Eugene being both with them to take an attentive survey of the ground. Having ascended the tower of a church, the two generals discovered the quartermasters of the Gallo-Bavarians marking out a camp between Blenheim and Lutzingen, and on that instant they resolved to give battle, and begin the attack before the confusion inseparable from a change of camps should be over.

Some officers, acquainted with the superiority of the enemy's forces and the strength of the positions they were taking up, ventured to remonstrate. "I know the danger," said Marlborough; "but a battle is absolutely necessary, and I rely on the bravery and discipline of the troops, which will make amends for our disadvantages."

During the evening and night, while the French and Bavarians were moving to their new camp, and extending their lines along the elevated ground which stretches from Blenheim to Lutzingen, Marlborough and Eugene calmly conferred together, taking into account the chances and uncertainty to which a battle is always liable, but devising the best means for securing a decisive victory. And as early as two o'clock in the morning of Sunday, the memorable 13th of August, these two generals broke up their camp, and by three o'clock crossed the Kessel, with an aggregate force of 52,000 men and fifty-two pieces of artillery. Marshal Tallard watched their movements with joy, anticipating nothing less than sliding between them and the Danube, and cutting them off from their communications with the places Marlborough had taken in Bavaria.

The confederates continued to advance over difficult ground, intersected with rivulets and ditches, Eugene leading the right wing and Marlborough the left. The water-

courses, the woods, and the hills behind Blenheim, were scanned with a careful eye; nearer at hand every inch of ground was examined; and from a certain point Marlborough and Eugene rode forward to observe the positions of the enemy, being attended by a Prussian general officer, who was perfectly well acquainted with that ground and all the local peculiarities, from having fought on it and been made a prisoner on it the preceding year, in the battle which Marshal Villars had gained over the Imperialists. Nothing was done in the dark; no move was made without first putting out feelers; such great commanders as Marlborough and Eugene neglected no precautions, and this was one of the main reasons of their being great commanders. Under each of them there were brave but rash officers who would have rushed on blindfold to the attack, to sweep the enemy from the face of the earth—but, in reality, to encounter disaster and defeat.

By seven o'clock the outposts and picquets of the Gallo-Bavarians were running back from all points, and their columns were seen forming in order of battle within the encampment. In all they amounted to 56,000 or 57,000 men, or to 4,000 or 5,000 more than the confederates, over whom they had an immense advantage in the rising ground they occupied. But in case of a defeat their situation must be hopeless, and Tallard and the elector had committed a great military error, in forming in two separate bodies at a considerable distance from each other with hardly any infantry between. "I have often heard," says Voltaire, "from the mouth of Marshal Villars, that this disposition of the army was inexcusable."

The united troops of the elector and General Marsin occupied the left at Lutzingen; Tallard stood on the right by Blenheim. A brigade of dismounted dragoons was posted behind a strong barricade of carts and wagons, between the village of Blenheim and the Danube; and three brigades occupied the village, and gave the hand to

the dismounted and well-covered dragoons. There were palisades, barricades, and well-guarded gates, and the open spaces in the village between the houses and the gardens were blocked up with carts, felled trees, and planks, all having behind them musketeers, who could fire their pieces in rest, and who were also well covered. Moreover, there was a small old castle by the village, and this and the tower of the village church were garnished with musketry; while a battalion of artillery was distributed within and about Blenheim, under the command of the French general, Clerambault, who was instructed to maintain the village to the last extremity: it was to this formidable point, having the little river Nevel flowing tranquilly before it, that Marlborough, after a short cannonade on both sides, during which he was nearly struck by a French cannon-ball, led his left wing, while Prince Eugene moved with the right to fall upon the elector and Marsin.

The duke sent the brave Lord Cutts to begin the attack on the village of Blenheim, he himself moving along the Nevel under a heavy fire of grape-shot, in order to seize an opportunity of throwing himself between the two divisions of the Gallo-Bavarians, whose communications were now maintained apparently by nothing but horse.

Lord Cutts, under another fire of grape, threw fascines into the bed of the Nevel, got across that stream, and deliberately advanced towards the palisades. The French in the village held their fire till Cutts was within thirty paces, and then they gave such a volley as laid prostrate a vast number of officers and men. But General Rowe, who was with Cutts and the leading brigade of English, walked coolly on, and stuck his sword into the palisade before he gave the word to fire. The French were covered, and the English uncovered; the palisades were strong; Rowe fell mortally wounded, his lieutenant-colonel and major were killed in attempting to remove his body, and the leading brigade, after losing one-third of its

number, was driven back and charged, and broken by three squadrons of gendarmes. But a body of Hessians moved forward to the support of the English, and drove the French horse back to the lines. Lord Cutts then got up five squadrons of cavalry, who experienced great difficulty in clearing the swamp, and who would have been driven back across the Nevel but for the steadiness of the Hessian infantry. After several sanguinary attacks and bold sallies on the part of the French, the brigades of Ferguson and Hudson crossed the stream at another point, forced the enemy to withdraw some artillery with which they had swept the fords, and advanced right in front of the village. The old national animosity and rivalry now blazed out: the French and English officers crossed swords through the palisades, and fought hand to hand; and the English soldiery, here and there, losing patience for the operations of loading and priming, thrust at the French through the openings in their defences with the points of their bayonets, or beat them on the head over the barricades with the butt-ends of their muskets.

But Lord Cutts, who appears to have had not a single cannon with him, saw that there was no hope of forcing the village without artillery, and he was compelled to order back his thinned ranks to the cover of some undulating ground. By keeping up the fight so hotly, he had distracted the attention of the enemy, and had favoured the movements and plans of the allies in other quarters.

In the mean time, Marlborough, with his eye on the wide gap that intervened between Tallard and Blenheim, and the elector and Marsin, pushed part of his infantry over some weak little bridges, and then, by means of fascines, trunks of trees, and heavy planks, he sent his cavalry after them. Both horse and foot were enfiladed on their passage by a portion of Clerambault's artillery; nevertheless, they formed on the opposite bank of the Nevel, threw back the charges of the French and Bavarian

cavalry, and kept their ground, waiting for the Prince of Holstein-Beck and his artillery, an arm which seems to have been badly employed during the early part of this battle; for Holstein-Beck had been cannonading the enemy from a point whence his balls could scarcely reach them, while Cutts and others had been hammered to death without a cannon to reply. Holstein-Beck had scarcely got half his force across the stream when he was charged by the Irish brigade in the pay of Louis XIV. who fought most desperately, and by other fresh troops of French or Bavarians; his highness was mortally wounded and made prisoner; his men, that were not driven back into the rivulet, were cut to pieces.

“’T was then great Marlborough’s mighty soul was prov’d,—
That, in the shock of charging hosts, unmov’d,
Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
Examin’d all the dreadful scenes of war.
In peaceful thought the field of death survey’d,—
To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid;
Inspir’d repuls’d battalions to engage,
And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.
So when an angel, by divine command,
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
Such as of late o’er pale Britannia past,
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
And, pleas’d the Almighty’s orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.”*

It was at this critical point of the fight that Marlborough in person galloped to the scene of carnage, and led a fresh brigade across the stream, at the same time ordering more haste to be made in bringing on the artillery, and extending some of his Danish and Hanoverian horse along the banks. In an instant he compelled the French horse to fall back; by one or two simple movements, he established a connection with the troops fighting on the right under Prince Eugene; and masked his own intended movement

* Addison—The Campaign.

(with his entire centre) upon Tallard, who had committed a series of mistakes, and was now about to be entirely cut off from his ally the elector, having vainly trusted that the cavalry placed in the gap, and his moving batteries, would prevent any advance of the confederates in that direction. By five in the afternoon the English general had formed his cavalry in two strong lines, and posted his infantry in their rear; and then, amidst a tremendous crash of cannon and musketry, he moved rapidly forward by a steep hill, upon which the French horse were now concentrated with a part of their infantry, which Tallard had brought out from the village of Blenheim. The summit of the hill was gained; but there Marlborough was brought to a pause by the firm array of the enemy, and even thrown back some hundred paces; but he repeated his attack with artillery and small-arms, gradually overpowered the fire of the enemy, and then, with a charge, broke the French horse, and cut down or made prisoners some regiments of infantry. Abandoned by the flight of his cavalry, Tallard now sent one officer to order the infantry to evacuate Blenheim entirely, and another officer to press the elector either to support him with a reinforcement, or to make a diversion in his favour by a dashing, offensive movement in the opposite direction. But the forlorn elector could do neither of these two things; the imperial cavalry, and other masses of the confederate army, now occupied the gap between him and the French marshal; and Prince Eugene, after sustaining several repulses, had driven the elector's troops beyond Lutzingen, had turned his flank, and posted himself behind a ravine, where he could scarcely be attacked with any effect.

Thus left to himself, and apparently before he could bring up or put in order his infantry, which had been stationed at Blenheim, Tallard was charged with the overwhelming force of the allied cavalry; and, broken and dismayed at once, he fled with part of his cavalry to Sonder-

heim, while the rest fled towards Hochstadt. Marlborough followed Tallard with the sword in his loins, drove a vast number of his men down the declivity near Blenheim into the Danube, and took still more prisoners. Cooped up at Sonderheim, with the broad Danube on one side, and victorious enemies on all other sides, Tallard, who had seen his own son killed in the *melée*, and who had been wounded himself, surrendered, together with very many officers of high rank. Nor had those of Tallard's people who fled for Hochstadt a better fate: they got entangled and foundered in a morass; were cut off by dragoons, and, in the end, they were nearly all slain, made prisoners, or drowned in the Danube, with the exception of the famous brigade of Grignan, and some of the gendarmes, who fell back to the heights beyond Hochstadt. There were instances of whole battalions laying down their arms at once, and crying for mercy.

Prince Eugene witnessed part of the operations, which ended in the flight of Tallard, from the hill-top, from the verge of the ravine above Lutzingen, where he had posted himself, safely, on the elector's flank; and, shortly after, observing Marsin's horse and the Bavarian infantry pouring in great disorder along the Lutzingen road, he judged that the elector was about to retreat from that point. Although his way lay across the ravine, and through trees and thickets, and although he had now only two squadrons of horse with him, Eugene advanced to intercept this wild retreat; and emerging into the plain, he did some mischief to the enemy, and then awaited there the arrival of the confederate cavalry, who were pressing hard on the flying Bavarian horse.

Marlborough, who had now nothing to do on his side, saw the flames rising from Lutzingen, which the retreating enemy had fired; and, being made aware of the advance of Eugene on the plain, he detached thither a mass of cavalry to co-operate with that brave prince. But night was now

falling, and the smoke from the burning town, and the smoke which had been left by the burning of such vast quantities of gunpowder, prevented Hompesch, who led this cavalry, from seeing distinctly. Eugene's force was thus mistaken for the elector's, and Hompesch drew rein, halted, and wheeled about, at the moment when a joint attack and close pursuit must have captured or destroyed all the forces that remained with the elector and Marsin. Having gained a short but precious time, through the smoke and the mistake it occasioned, the elector fell back in tolerably good order upon Dillingen.

The sternly-contested and bloody field was not yet cleared : still the village of Blenheim was held by 12,000 men, who either had not had time to obey the evacuating order sent by Tallard, or who had fallen back into the village, as the most covered and safest place during the headlong retreat. Clerambault, who had commanded there, was missing—it was afterwards ascertained that he was drowned in the Danube—but the French in the village made a most resolute and gallant resistance. When they saw that Marlborough was surrounding the village with troops and artillery, they attempted to rush out and gain a road which led to Sonderheim; but here they were headed back by the brave Scots Greys, that splendid cavalry regiment which may be said to have won its first laurels at Blenheim; and when they tried to break through in another direction, their way was barred by the massed squadrons of the cavalry, under General Ross. In these close encounters, the French fell in heaps. Still, however, they sheltered themselves behind their barricades and the garden walls and houses of the village, and kept up a sharp fire. At length, fire was set to the houses; batteries were planted all round within musket-shot; and every road, every path, every issue was blocked up. Then a parley took place: the French proposed a capitulation; but Marlborough's brother, General Churchill, rode up to the

barricades, and insisted on an unconditional surrender; and to these hard terms the brave men were forced to come at last, twenty-four battalions and twelve squadrons laying down their arms to the conqueror. It was with despair and indignation that the French troops submitted to their fate. The regiment of Navarre burned their colours and buried their arms, that such trophies might not grace the triumph of an English enemy.

The fate of the day was no sooner decided, than Marlborough, taking from his pocket-book a slip of paper, wrote, with a coarse pencil, a hasty note to his wife:—

“August 13th, 1704.

“I have not time to say more, but to beg you will give my duty to the Queen, and let her know her army has had a glorious victory. M. Tallard, and two other generals, are in my coach, and I am following the rest. The bearer, my aide-de-camp, Colonel Parke, will give her an account of what has passed. I shall do it in a day or two, by another, more at large.

“MARLBOROUGH.”

This note is preserved in the family archives at Blenheim-palace, as one of the most curious memorials and relics of the hero.* It was written on a slip of paper, which was evidently torn from a memorandum-book; for on the back is a note of tavern expenses, and a short entry relating to bread furnished to the troops.

The total loss of the Gallo-Bavarians on this decisive day, in prisoners, killed, and drowned, exceeded rather than fell short of 35,000 men. The army, which was to have overturned the empire, and to impose the will of Louis XIV. on the whole of Europe, was annihilated. Marlborough and his allies lost on their side, in killed and wounded, good 12,000 men.†

* A fac-simile is given in the work of Archdeacon Coxe.

† Dr. Hare carefully journalized the battle of Blenheim, and the movements which preceded it. We have chiefly followed his account

"Such," says Voltaire, "was the celebrated battle, which the French call the battle of Hochstet; the Germans, Plenheim; and the English, Blenheim. The conquerors had about 5,000 killed and 8,000 wounded, the greater part being on the side of Prince Eugene. The French army was almost destroyed; of 60,000 men, so long victorious, there never reassembled more than 20,000 effective. About 12,000 killed, 14,000 prisoners, all the cannon, a prodigious number of colours and standards, all the tents and equipages, the general of the army, and 1,200 officers of mark, in the power of the conqueror, signalized that day! The fugitives dispersed in all directions. More than a hundred leagues of country were lost in less than one month. The whole of Bavaria, falling under the yoke of the Emperor, experienced all the rigour of the irritated Austrian government, and all the rapacity and barbarity of a victorious soldiery. The elector, flying for refuge to Brussels, met, on the road, his brother, the Elector of Cologne, driven, like himself, out of his states: they embraced, in a flood of tears. Astonishment and consternation seized the Court of Versailles, so long accustomed to prosperity. The news of the defeat arrived there in the midst of the rejoicings for the birth of a great-grandson of Louis XIV. Nobody dared inform the king of so cruel a truth. Madame de Maintenon was obliged to tell his Majesty, *that he was no longer invincible.*"*

But all France, as well as the Court of Versailles, was thrown into consternation and despondency; and the same feeling prevailed throughout every part of Germany, and, indeed, throughout every part of Europe where the people or their princes were in the interest of Louis XIV. These feelings were all the stronger, from the confident hope which

and two despatches of the duke,—one, in English, to Mr. Secretary Harley, and one, in French, to the States-General,—which will be found in Sir George Murray's valuable collection.

* *Siccle de Louis XIV.*

had been previously entertained, that, if Marlborough could only be caught in the heart of Europe, and far away from English and Dutch fleets, he and his army must be utterly crushed.

It was only the unpatriotic faction at home that could disparage the results of the victory. These men said, that as for weakening the French king, this was no more than taking a bucket of water out of a river. "If they will only allow us to draw one or two such buckets more," said Marlborough, "we may then let the river run quietly, and not much apprehend its overflowing and destroying its neighbours."

When all was over, the Duke of Marlborough took up his head-quarters in a little water-mill near Hochstadt, where he laid himself down and slept soundly for a short time. The garrison of Hochstadt having surrendered, he entered the town at the dawn of day in company with Prince Eugene—a colleague, in every sense, worthy of him. As usual with him, the duke's first care was devoted to the means of supplying the wants of his troops. Having visited the magazines of provisions and stores in the town, he then issued his orders of the day. What follows is from the pen of one who was present at the remarkable interview, and who kept a regular journal of all the important events of this campaign.

"Afterwards the two commanders, accompanied by Counts Wratislaw and Maffei, and several general officers, visited Marshal Tallard, at the quarters of the Prince of Hesse. In their way, they ordered all the standards, colours, cannon, etc., taken from the enemy, to be committed to the care of Colonel Blood. Reaching the marshal's quarters, they found him very much dejected, and wounded in one of his hands. His grace humanely inquired how far it was in his power to make him easy under his misfortunes, offering him the convenience of his quarters, and the use of his coach. The marshal thankfully declined the offer, saying, he

did not desire to move till he could have his own equipage. His grace accordingly despatched one of his own trumpets to the electoral army, with a passport for bringing it to the marshal. During the interview the marshal directed the conversation to the events of the preceding day, which Marlborough would fain have avoided from motives of delicacy. He told the duke, that if his grace had deferred his visit, meaning his attack, a day longer, the elector and he would have waited on him first.

“The duke asking why they did it not on the 12th, when they were expected, the marshal answered, they would have done it before, had they not been informed that Prince Louis of Baden had joined his grace, with his army from Ingoldstadt; and that four prisoners, whom their squadrons had taken that day from our army, had given the information, and had agreed in their intelligence, though questioned separately.*

“At this interview many of the French generals crowded about his grace, admiring his person, as well as his tender and generous behaviour. Each had something to say for himself, which his grace and Prince Eugene heard with the greatest modesty and compassion. Prince Eugene much commended the conduct of the Elector of Bavaria, as well as the behaviour of his troops, and frankly told how often and how bravely he had been repulsed by them. When he spoke of his own troops, he said, ‘I have not a squadron or battalion which did not charge four times, at least.’”†

After staying with Marshal Tallard above an hour, the duke, the prince, and all their company returned to the army. Having ordered the troops to march from Hochstadt, as far as Steinheim, Marlborough rode over the field

* It has been reasonably conjectured that these four prisoners had instructions from Marlborough or Eugene to suffer themselves to be taken, in order to mislead the enemy by this false report.

† Dr. Hare's MS. Journal, as quoted by Archdeacon Coxe.

of battle. From right to left the dead, of friends and foes, lay in heaps on the ground, stripped by camp-followers and other marauders, stark-naked, gory, and ghastly to behold. He sympathized for the loss of so many brave companions in arms, and gave orders for their decent interment.

On reaching his quarters at Steinheim, his grace commanded two detachments to take possession of Lawingen and Dillingen, and ordered the bridges, which the elector had burned, to be promptly repaired. It was now about the hour of noon, the day after the battle. Towards evening he found time to write to the duchess.

“August 14th.

“Before the battle was quite done yesterday, I writ to my dearest soul to let her know that I was well, and that God had blessed her Majesty’s arms with as great a victory as has ever been known; for prisoners I have the Marshal de Tallard, and the greatest part of his general officers, above 8,000 men, and near 1,500 officers. In short, the army of M. de Tallard, which was that which I fought with, is quite ruined; that of the Elector of Bavaria and the Marshal de Marsin, which Prince Eugene fought against, I am afraid has not had much loss, for I can’t find that he has many prisoners. As soon as the elector knew that M. de Tallard was like to be beaten, he marched off, so that I came only time enough to see him retire. As all these prisoners are taken by the troops I command, it is in my power to send as many of them to England as her majesty shall think for her honour and service I am so very much out of order with having been seventeen hours on horseback yesterday, and not having been able to sleep above three hours last night, that I can write to none of my friends. However I am so pleased with this action, that I can’t end my letter without being so vain as to tell my dearest soul, that within the memory of man there has been no victory so great as this; and as I am sure you love me entirely well,

you will be infinitely pleased with what has been done, upon my account as well as the great benefit the public will have. For had the success of Prince Eugene been equal to his merit, we should in that day's action have made an end of the war."

Marlborough and Eugene remained four days at Steinheim to rest and refresh the troops. Many more prisoners came in, bringing their total number to more than 11,000; and two German regiments, amounting to 3,000 men more, deserted the enemy and took service with the conqueror.

Marlborough's great victory had been preceded on the morning of the 13th by prayers said all along his line; on the morning of the 18th, the whole army returned thanks to God. These were no "forced hallelujahs"; the soldiers who had survived such a carnage felt ample cause for gratitude; and Marlborough, as he assured his wife, returned thanks with all his heart. In the same letter, dated on the 18th, he says, "I am told the elector has sent for his wife and children to come to him at Ulm. If this be true, he will not then quit the French interest, which I had much rather he should do, if it might be upon reasonable terms. My dearest wife, if we could have another such a day as Sunday last, I should then hope we might have such a peace as that I might enjoy the remaining part of my life with you."*

The harmony and perfect union of the two illustrious chiefs, which had contributed so materially to the victory, continued after it was won. Marlborough, in his private letters, seemed never to tire of dwelling on the frankness and liberality of Eugene, on his candour and conciliatory manners, and on his political as well as military abilities. Eugene rendered equal justice to the straightforwardness, temper, and talents of Marlborough.

"In vain, perhaps, may we seek in the pages of military history for a similar example of two generals, united in

* Letters as given by Archdeacon Cox.

opinion as in views, emulous without rivalry, equal in command and in honours, yet not contending for pre-eminence. Contemporary writers justly describe them as two bodies animated by one soul; and a Dutch medalist commemorated their union with peculiar felicity of thought, by exhibiting on one side of a medal the busts of the two heroes in profile, and on the other, the field of Blenheim, with the figure of Fame floating in the air, and sounding their praises. Above is the motto,

“*Heroum concordia victrix.*”

In the bottom of the exerque, on each side, is a Latin distich, more consonant to truth than poetry, comparing them to Castor and Pollux, the two demi-gods of antiquity, who were no less distinguished for their fraternal affection than for their love of glory. This singular concord was equally conspicuous amidst all the trying events of the war, and may be reckoned as one of the principal causes which produced such astonishing success.”*

Having cleared Germany of the enemy, the confederate army was now preparing to march to the Rhine, in the intention of winding up the campaign with the siege and reduction of Landau. By the intervention of Count Wratislaw, the imperial minister, the Margrave of Baden was induced to relinquish the siege of Ingoldstadt, in which he had made considerable progress; and, leaving a sufficient force for the blockade of that place, he marched with the rest of his army to co-operate in more important enterprises. Part of the margrave's troops were shortly afterwards left under the command of General Thungen for the reduction of Ulm; the remainder were to carry the war into the country beyond the Rhine.

The conduct of the Elector of Bavaria was so annoying that it would have ruffled the temper of almost any other man than Marlborough: one day he offered to treat with

* Archdeacon Coxe's Memoirs.

the victors and to abandon the French, the next day he clung to the French again and defied the English and their confederates ; he made appointments which he did not keep, and rejected propositions for which he or his own emissaries had implored the magnanimity of the enemy. The hatred of the Austrians to the Bavarians was hereditary and proverbial ; the Hessians and Prussians partook in the feelings, and, generally, the entire German portion of the confederacy would have driven the elector to the direst extremities, and would not have left him an acre of territory or a single dollar in his treasury. But the English were entirely free from these antipathies and hatreds—hatreds well nigh as violent as those which raged among the small Italian republics of the middle ages ; and no equivocation and vacillation, no vexatious delay and insincerity on the part of the unfortunate elector, could awake an angry feeling in the breast of the hero of Blenheim. In no one part of his life does Marlborough appear to better advantage, or in more amiable colours than this. He pitied the elector ; he almost wept over the forlorn situation of his wife and children, who were going hither and thither without finding a safe rest in any place. On the 21st of August, he writes to the duchess:—"The poor electress has taken five of her children with her, and is following her husband, who seems to be abandoned to the French interest. Prince Eugene and I have offered him, by a gentleman that is not returned, that if he will join in the common cause against France, he shall be put in possession of his whole country, and receive from the Queen of England 400,000 crowns yearly, for which he should only furnish the allies with 8,000 men ; but I take it for granted he is determined to go for France, and abandon his own country to the rage of the Germans." Four days later, he announces to the duchess that the poor electress is again on the road. "The Elector of Bavaria," he says, "has sent his wife and children back towards Munich ; and this morning, by a trumpet, has writ to me,

and in it a letter to the electress, open. *It has made my heart ache, being very sensible how cruel it is to be separated from what one loves!* I have sent it to her by a trumpet of my own, with assurances that her answer shall be carefully delivered to the elector, *for I take pleasure in being easy when the service does not suffer by it.*"* After proceeding beyond Memmingen to console her husband by her presence, the electress had found her roads stopped by the allied troops, and had been absolutely compelled to return with her children towards Munich. In her despair she despatched her father confessor to the English camp, and Marlborough prevailed on Prince Eugene and Count Wratislaw to offer her and her family a safe residence at Munich, together with a competent guard, and a regular allowance from the revenues of her husband.

By the 2nd of September Marlborough was across the river Neckar, and by the afternoon of the 5th he and Prince Eugene were beyond the Rhine, diligently surveying the country. By the 7th the mass of the allied army had filed over, and had taken possession of a strong camp at Spirebach, to which the French under Villeroi were believed to be at this moment hastening by forced marches along the Rhine. These frequent passages of rivers appear to have been conducted with a skill and a degree of security hitherto unknown in modern warfare. We rarely hear of any, the slightest casualty, even when the passage is effected in the greatest haste, with the enemy, if not actually in presence, at a very short distance from our troops. During this last passage of the Rhine, which occupied nearly the whole of an autumnal day, the French were within three leagues of our defiling columns. Marlborough was on horseback from morning to night having his eye everywhere, and attending to everything himself.

As Villeroi had established himself on the little river Queich, and was employed in fortifying a position exceed-

* Correspondence, as published by Archdeacon Coxe.

ingly advantageous for the defence of Landau, which Marlborough was determined to take, the allied generals concluded that Villeroi would attempt to oppose their progress. They therefore broke up on the 9th of September and advanced to the pass of Belheim. But instead of making a stand, the French fell hastily back without firing a shot. This and other facts clearly proved the spiritless state of dejection into which a brave people had fallen after the battles of Schellenberg and Blenheim. Having repaired the bridges which the French had only partially destroyed, the allies crossed over and encamped on the ground which had just been occupied by Villeroi. The French, at a short distance, lay all night under arms; but as Marlborough and Eugene advanced on the morrow morning, they fell back in some confusion behind the Lauter, and thence they retreated to the Motter, where they hoped to be safe from attack during the coming siege of Landau. They had thus abandoned positions covered with thick woods and marshy grounds, and at all times famous for their defensive strength. Marlborough was astonished at the facility of his advance. "If," said he, "they had not been the most frightened people in the world, they would never have quitted those posts."* This was said on the 12th of September, and that morning the Margrave of Baden marched to invest Landau, both Marlborough and Eugene undertaking to cover the siege of that important place. Before the campaign closed, Landau and Traerbach were both taken, the besiegers being strengthened in men and in materials by the arrival of the greater part of the force left before Ulm, which fortress had surrendered after a very short resistance.

Before Marlborough returned home, he received from the Emperor Leopold a letter addressed "To the Most Illustrious Prince of Us and the Holy Roman Empire, John, Duke of Marlborough, &c. announcing in form his eleva-

* Letter to Lord Treasurer Godolphin.

tion to a place among the princes of the empire, &c. The fortunate soldier, however, could not have a seat in the diet till he was master of an imperial fief in the empire; his friends Godolphin and Harley raised their objections, and as Leopold was ready neither with money nor land, the high honour was held in suspense for the present.

Marlborough, however, employed his influence and address to bring about a reconciliation between the emperor and his revolted subjects in Hungary, whose formidable insurrection, promoted by the French, had embarrassed the operations of the present campaign, by obliging Leopold to keep a large part of his army continually on the frontiers, or in the provinces of Hungary. His success fell short of his expectations; for Leopold, who would have listened to terms in the moment of danger, when Tallard and the Elector of Bavaria were upon the high road to Vienna, would give ear to none when Marlborough had dissipated the danger.

In the month of November, the English general, who was at least as able in negotiations and court proceedings as he was in war, made a journey to Berlin to engage the king of Prussia to suspend certain claims he had upon the Dutch, to enter into the confederacy still more earnestly, and to furnish still more troops. His Prussian majesty promised 8,000 men for the speedy relief of the Duke of Savoy; and then Marlborough travelled, in miserably cold weather, to Hanover, where he met with a warm reception from "the Protestant succession," the family which only waited for the death of Anne to ascend the throne of England. The elector was an ally and member of the confederacy which had been the means of raising the general to the summit of honour; but, apart from the business of war, there were, of course, other powerful considerations to draw Marlborough to the court of the Guelphs. The intrigues with the court of St. Germain's had never ceased for a day; and there were still people in England ardently set upon

bringing back the Pretender, if death should remove Queen Anne.

From Hanover he went to the Hague, and thence set out for England. He arrived at the palace of St. James's in the middle of December, carrying with him Marshal Tallard and the rest of his more distinguished prisoners, together with the standards he had taken, and the other trophies of his great victory. His reception was in every way flattering; and all classes seemed in ecstasy except the ultra-Tories, who threatened nothing less than an impeachment for what, even after its success, they chose to style his *rash* march on the Danube. The parliament had assembled on the preceding 29th of October, and on the 15th of December, the day after his arrival, Marlborough took his seat in the House of Peers, being welcomed by the lord-keeper with an address of congratulation. On the same day a committee of the Commons waited upon him with the thanks of their house, for his glorious services. Processions and city feasts followed in abundance.

“On the 3rd of January (1705), the trophies of the victory were removed from the Tower, where they were first deposited, to Westminster Hall. The cavalcade consisted of companies of horse and foot guards, intermixed with persons of distinction, who attended to do honour to the occasion, and was closed by 128 pikemen, each having an uplifted standard. Amidst the thunder of artillery, and the shouts of an exulting multitude, the procession moved through the streets of London and Westminster in solemn pomp, and, traversing the Green Park, was viewed by the queen from one of the windows of the palace. Since the defeat of the Spanish Armada, so triumphant a spectacle had never gladdened the eyes of a British public; nor was the effect unworthy of the occasion: the pulse of the nation beat high with joy, and the names of Anne and Marlborough were mingled amidst the testimonies of

tumultuous exultations which burst from all ranks and orders."*

"Prince Eugene," says Bishop Burnet, "had a just share in the honours of the great expedition, which he had promoted by his councils, and did so nobly support by his conduct. The Prince of Baden had no share in the public joy; his conduct was as bad as could be, and the fret he was possessed with, upon the glory that the other generals carried from him, threw him, as was believed, into a languishing of which he never recovered, and of which he died two years after."

But it was not in the power of victory or glory, or any exploit, or any benefit conferred on England and all Europe, to disarm the persevering enmity of faction, or silence the ribald tongue of self-constituted critics in war, stratageties, and policy. Although the House of Commons voted Marlborough an address, because the Lords shewed them the example, they did it grudgingly and ungraciously, and took care to name in the said address, and with equal praise, an indecisive battle fought with the French fleet, off Malaga, by Admiral Sir George Rooke.

The spirit of party was embittered, if not by religious zeal and the *odium theologicum*, by a very strong affectation of that zeal, by a party who had taken up a religious question solely upon political grounds. The stormy debates on the "Occasional Conformity Bill," may be read in any full history of England. The ultra-Tory party supported the bill, which was conceived in a spirit of persecution; Marlborough, Godolphin, and their friends, strenuously opposed the bill in its last stage—*Hinc iræ et lachrymæ*. Moreover, for some time past, seeing how impracticable the extra high-church and ultra-Tory party was becoming, the Duchess of Marlborough and Lord Godolphin had been endeavouring to gain over the moderate and sound portion of the Whig party, and had made advances,

* Coxe's Life.

conferred favours, and concerted parliamentary schemes, which were secrets to nobody about the court, or at all engaged in public life. A keen examination of these matters will not raise our opinion of the sincerity and political honesty of the days of Good Queen Anne: in every one of them egotism and selfishness are the things most visible. Godolphin—himself above all mean vices—was compelled to sacrifice to those vices in other men: the party who opposed his government, with the exception of a few sincere zealots, were looking for money and aggrandizement.

We have repeatedly alluded to the disparaging, dangerous tone assumed towards the hero of Blenheim, as a matter far too important to be overlooked. The outcry was kept up by that hostile party in the House of Commons, which, but for the steadiness of the lord-treasurer, and the influence of the duchess with the queen and many of the statesmen of the day, would assuredly have led to the recall of the duke, and some great national disgrace. The hostility was most vehement.

During the march through Germany, and while the plans of Marlborough were not yet developed, the violent Tories, as well as the enemies to the Anglican establishment, had openly declared that they would attack him in parliament. They complained that the troops were led on a distant and perilous expedition; that the territory of the Dutch was left exposed to the superior forces of the enemy; and that the general had exceeded the limits of his instruction, and the responsibility of a subject, with a view to promote his own private interest. Rochester and Nottingham in the Lords, and Sir Edward Seymour in the Commons, gave the signal to their party. Sir Edward Seymour even declared, in the language of a sportsman, that he and his friends would pounce upon the adventurous commander, on his return, as hounds pounce on a hare; and threats were even thrown out, that his rash expedition, if unsuccessful, would probably bring his head to the block.

But when a decisive victory was gained, when the empire and England were rescued from the impending peril, and the glory of Marlborough shone forth with transcendent lustre, his enemies were confounded though not silenced. The shame of their frustrated prophecies rankled in their memory; their pride was wounded by the downfall of that colossus which had so long been the subject of their eulogy; and they saw that the same hand which had disproved the invincibility of France, had sealed their own exclusion from power. In the heartfelt agony of disappointed ambition and mortified vanity, they had no alternative but to decry that success which they had declared to be unattainable, and to hold forth the yet inexhaustible resources and unconquered spirit of the enemy. They represented the victory as a useless waste of blood, and the first of an endless series of conflicts with a power which rose, like the hydra, with new vigour from every defeat. These clamours and invectives were transmitted in exaggerated terms by the duchess to her husband. Though her letters are lost, some written by her correspondent, Mrs. Burnet, still remain, which were communicated to the duke, and furnish a new proof of the implacable spirit of party.*

But the party-violence of the enemies of Marlborough inflicted a deep injury to their cause or their interests. The Earl of Rochester (Queen Anne's own uncle), the Earl of Nottingham, and other ultra-Tories, were driven into retirement; friends of the fortunate general were rapidly brought into office; and a favourable majority was secured in the House of Commons. The queen could at length indulge the sentiments of her gratitude towards the duke, and affection towards the duchess. The Commons presented an address, soliciting her Majesty to consider of

* Archdeacon Coxe's Memoirs. The Archdeacon gives extracts from some of the letters of Mrs. Burnet, who was wife to the bishop, as also from some of Marlborough's own letters, which clearly shew his deep disgust and indignation.

proper means for perpetuating the memory of the great services performed by the Duke of Marlborough.

On the 17th of February 1705, Anne informed the House, that, in conformity with their application, she purposed to convey to the Duke of Marlborough, and his heirs, the royal manor and honour of Woodstock, with the Hundred of Wooton, and requested supplies for clearing off the encumbrances on that domain. A bill for the purpose passed both houses without opposition, and it received the royal sanction on the 14th of March. The preamble of the bill recapitulated the unparalleled services performed by the duke to his own sovereign and country, and to all Europe; and that the gift itself should remain as a perpetual memorial, it was made a condition of the tenure, that the possessor should present to the queen and her successors, on the anniversary of the battle of Blenheim, a standard, emblazoned with three fleurs-de-lis on a field argent, the achievement of France.

Nor did Anne's gratitude stop here: she accompanied the grant of Woodstock with an order to the Board of Works to erect on the grounds, at the royal expense, a splendid palace, which, in memory of the victory, was to be called the Castle of Blenheim. A model was immediately constructed for the approbation of her Majesty, and the work was forthwith commenced under the direction of Mr. afterwards Sir John Vanbrugh,—a poet, dramatist, wit, and artist,—who was then regarded as one of the very first of English architects.*

The duke went down to Woodstock, surveyed the grounds which were destined to be enclosed as a park, and was delighted with the whole aspect of the country. He had always a strong taste for a quiet, rural life; and in his subsequent campaigns, we find him frequently sighing to be released from the care and turmoils of war and politics, and

* Archdeacon Coxe. Parliamentary Journals. History of Europe, for the year 1705. Lediare's Life of the Duke.

longing to be with his wife and children, and children's children, among the trees and green lanes of Oxfordshire.

The country-house in which he had most lived was at Sandridge, near St. Albans, in the charming county of Hertfordshire.

BOOK III.

THE glorious campaign of 1704, with the reduction of Landau, in Alsace, had opened the way to the Moselle and the most vulnerable part of the French frontier. On quitting the continent, he had confidently hoped to commence this year's campaign on the Moselle.

Embarking at Harwich, on the 31st of March, he arrived at the Hague on the 3rd of April, after a troublesome and dangerous passage. He at once communicated to the States-General the plan for the ensuing campaign, which had been secretly concerted with Prince Eugene during the siege of Landau, and subsequently approved by the English cabinet. The two great generals felt the benefits which almost always attend an offensive war; and they were wearied of seeing France make nearly every country in Europe her battle-field, while none seemed to think seriously of invading France. With 90,000 men, Marlborough would have glided between the Saar and the Moselle, reduced the fortress of Saar-Louis before the French could take the field, crossed the Vosges mountains, overrun Lorraine, and thence have pointed the heads of his columns towards the French capital. But everything depended upon promptitude and immediate action, and none of his allies were ready, or in a humour to get ready: the Imperialists had broken the promises they had made him; and the Dutch States met him with factious opposition, frivolous objections, and discordant views, which harassed him almost into an illness. He wrote to the duchess:—"I am like a sick body, that turns from one part of the bed to the other; for I would fain be gone from hence, in

hopes to find more quiet in the army. Yet God only knows what case I may have when I get there!"

It was not until the 4th of May that the Dutch government gave its imperfect consent, and that Marlborough could commence his journey: and then he had to encounter jealousy and violent ill-humour on the part of the Margrave of Baden,—who, instead of Prince Eugene, was to co-operate with him in this campaign,—and fresh delays, and other squabbles and misunderstandings, on the part of the cabinet of Vienna. The Hungarian revolt absorbed the attention of that government; and the Imperialist battalions and squadrons on the Rhine had been greatly weakened, in order that their best men might be sent beyond the Danube to contend with the Magyars. There was, moreover, a faction in Austria against Prince Eugene, as there was one in England against Marlborough; and this Vienna faction took a malicious and selfish delight in counteracting all the grand schemes of the prince.

On reaching Coblentz, where the Margrave of Baden had promised to meet him, Marlborough received a letter, in which the old tormentor stated that he was not very well in health, and begged that the English commander would not think of going to see him at Rastadt. This greatly increased Marlborough's uneasiness. "If there be no other way of speaking with him," he wrote to Godolphin, "I shall be necessitated to go to his house at Rastadt; for, let it cost me what pains it will, *he must be put in humour, if possible.*"

It was this constantly-recurring necessity of putting jealous, wayward, fractious, old gentlemen into good humour, that so tried the wonderful temper and patience of Marlborough: the provisioning of an army, though often difficult enough,—the conduct of a campaign,—the heavy work and heavier cares of a pitched battle,—were as nothing compared to wearying, never-ending work like this! "The man was Job!" said the late General Sir George Murray, after

reading Marlborough's private letters and despatches without any comment.

At this anxious moment, the duke received intelligence from Vienna of the death of the old and phlegmatic Emperor Leopold, on the 5th of May. The event was announced to him by Leopold's son and successor, Joseph, a young and high-spirited prince, who fully appreciated the merits of the duke, as well as the genius and valour of Prince Eugene. The change for the better was not, however, so great as the two illustrious soldiers of the day had expected. Hungary continued to act as a drain on the resources of the house of Austria, and there was no possibility of putting the Margrave of Baden and his party into sincere good humour.

At length, but not until the close of the month of May, the margrave promised to co-operate with twenty battalions and forty squadrons, or not more than one-half of the force which the duke had expected from him. During the precious time which had thus been allowed them, the French had made their preparations, had strengthened their menaced frontier, and had conferred the command of their army of the Moselle on Marshal Villars, who, if not a great strategist, was brave, active, dashing, and resolute in the extreme. On the whole, Villars was the most formidable adversary with whom Marlborough had ever to contend on the battle-field.

From their winter-quarters up to Treves, the British troops had a very unpleasant march through a hungry and unfriendly country. "After we had quitted Juliers," says the duke's chaplain, "you never saw so wretched a country. The soil, barren, mountainous, fruitful in nothing but iron; and the air strangely cold, as if it had been in the midst of winter. The towns have all the marks of poverty that French oppression or government can give; and to make the little accommodation an army could meet with in so wretched a country still less, there was not a soul to be seen

in the villages, the peasants flying as we came, either into places of defence or to the woods, and conveying what they could of the little they had along with them, which left us in want of everything, and made both officers and soldiers pass their time ill enough. I will only add, that the Scots think an army in their Highlands could shift better.”*

By the beginning of June, Marlborough concentrated his forces on the Moselle, having his head-quarters at Igel. Here, too, the country was bare : there was very little corn, no hay, and no grass to cut. The magazines of provisions which had been promised did not yet exist, “so that,” says the duke, “we are much more afraid of starvation than of the enemy.” “All these misfortunes,” he adds, “make one very uneasy, but we must struggle as long as we can. This condition of ours is fit to be known but by very few ; but in a short time it would be very happy for us if the Marshal de Villars would venture a battle, for in all likelihood that would put us at ease.”† Instead of the promised twenty battalions, and forty squadrons, the margrave was bringing up only twelve battalions and twenty-eight squadrons, and these did not reach the Moselle until the middle of June, and by that time the margrave, pretending another sickness, had gone to drink the waters at Schlangenbad, and had given up the command to the Count de Frise. Instead of having with him the 80,000 men which had been promised, Marlborough had hardly more than 40,000.

The campaign on the Moselle, with the invasion of France, was clearly and irretrievably ruined ; and, while Marlborough was collecting provisions, most alarming despatches reached him from the States-General, which obliged him to fall back with some precipitation to the Meuse. Marshal Villeroy, with a reinforced French army, by a sudden effort on the Meuse, had captured Huy, taken the town of Liege, and invested its citadel ; while the Dutch

* Dr. Hare’s MS. account of the campaign, in a series of letters.

† Letters to Lord Godolphin.

general, Auverquerque, or Overkirk, was cooped up in a camp near Maestricht, with a force too weak to do anything but look on. A general panic prevailed throughout the United Provinces: the French partisans, always numerous among the Dutch, began to clamour for peace, and the clamour was instantly re-echoed by the disaffected in England. When our home politicians saw that the cabinet of Lord Godolphin was not to be intimidated by the outcry, they renewed their dismal predictions: the Dutch would make peace without us; the Rhine and the Scheldt would be obstructed; a blockade on the coast by a united French and Dutch fleet would cut off our army from their shipping, and the winner of the useless victory at Blenheim would be compelled to lay down his arms! But, though violently swayed by fears and factions, and though, in themselves, a popular and weak government, the States-General proved true and firm, and Marlborough hastened to their rescue with a rapidity, which, for that period, was altogether marvellous.*

On the 17th of June, at midnight, the allied army decamped, without beat of drum, in the midst of a deluge of rain. By the 25th, Marlborough had united his different columns in the vicinity of Duren.

Here he had the satisfaction to learn that his rapid advance had struck a panic into the enemy, who had relinquished their design on the citadel of Liege, withdrawn their artillery, and were falling back to Tongres. He, therefore, quitted his army early in the morning of the 26th, and reached Maestricht at noon, to concert with Overkirk an offensive movement against the enemy in their retreat. Efficient arrangements were instantly made for a speedy advance and junction of all the confederate forces. On the 2nd of July, while the troops of Marlborough traversed the Meuse, near Viset, Overkirk decamped, and both armies, directing their route to the same point, united in the vic-

* On one day (June 24) he marched nine leagues.

nity of Haneff. The presence of one man changed the scene. The enemy, so recently elate with the hopes of conquest, were no sooner apprised of the arrival of Marlborough at Maestricht, than they broke up from Tongres; and though superior in numbers, withdrew towards Montenaeken, north of the Mehaigne. On the 4th, therefore, the confederates advanced from Haneff; but the enemy, instead of awaiting their approach, again precipitately retreated, and sought the protection of their lines, Villeroi establishing his head-quarters at Mierdorp, and the elector drawing farther to the left, in the direction of Tirlemont. Accordingly, Marlborough posted his army between Fresin and Lens les Beguines, where he fixed his head-quarters, and Overkirk encamped near Brett, on the northern bank of the Mehaigne.

As the enemy could not be brought to battle, Marlborough's next object was to recover possession of Huy, which, in the hands of the French, interrupted the navigation of the Meuse. On the 6th of July, as soon as the artillery was ready, he detached General Shultz to invest that place. On the same day, Overkirk removed his camp to Vignamont, in order to cover the siege.

At this juncture, the duke received intelligence that the unworthy coadjutors he had left behind him on the Upper Rhine had abandoned, without fighting, Treves and Saarbruck; that the magazines, which he had been collecting with so much care, had been left to the enemy; and that, in fact, all the conquests he had made in that direction during the preceding campaign were absolutely lost. If these events had resulted from the chances of war, from any great accident or calamity, or from the overwhelming force of the enemy, they might have been borne; but they had been produced by nothing but a vile mixture of obstinacy, incompetency, folly, and villany; and calm as was the temper of our great soldier and statesman, it was more than ruffled by the unexpected events. "My head and heart,"

said he, "are so full of the disappointments I have met with in this country, that I do from my soul wish to be out of the troublesome business; for I see but too plainly that the jealousy of Prince Louis, and the backwardness of the German princes, will always hinder us from succeeding here, which is the most sensible part in which we might do the most hurt to France Nothing but my gratitude to the queen could oblige me to serve her after the disappointments I have met with in Germany; for nothing has been performed that was promised I am wasted to nothing by perpetual vexations, and fearing the world may blame me for other people's faults." He spoke seriously of resigning the command and returning to England. Then the state of his health and spirits threatened to render this retirement a matter, not of choice, but of necessity. In this frame of mind he wrote to the queen, recommending to her Majesty his faithful friend Godolphin, the most honest as well as the most able of her ministers. He said, in simple, affecting language: "By the vexation and trouble I undergo I find a daily decay, which may deprive me of the honour of seeing your Majesty any more, which thought makes me take the liberty to beg of your Majesty, that, for your own sake and the happiness of your kingdoms, you will never suffer anybody to do the lord-treasurer an ill office. For besides his integrity for your service, his temper and abilities are such, that he is the only man in England capable of giving such advice as may keep you out of the hands of both parties, which may at last make you happy, if quietness can be had in a country where there is so much of faction."

Happily this indisposition and despondency did not last long. Marlborough roused himself, and again quoted his old motto, "We must do the best we can." Huy surrendered to his arms on the 11th, and on the very next day he was busied in preparations for forcing the French lines, from behind which Villeroy would not stir.

These lines were very formidable: they were flanked by the two great fortresses of Namur and Antwerp, and in the interval were numerous fortified posts, particularly those of Leuwe, Heilisheim, Diest, Siehem, Aerschot, and Lierre; it had natural as well as artificial defences,—rivulets, ditches, canals, and difficult embankments. The only chance of success lay in keeping his plan of attack a profound secret; for whenever any such plan was known in the allied camp, it was, by some means or other, imparted to the enemy. In the present case the secret was well kept, because it was imparted to none until the moment of execution. Certain movements were made to perplex the French, and rumours were industriously circulated that the duke was about to return to the Rhine and the Moselle. Then Overkirk was moved to that part of the line which was nearest to Namur, and Marlborough, leaning to the left, made the French believe that he was going to co-operate with Overkirk in that direction: Villeroi was completely deceived, and concentrated 40,000 men near Namur. On the night of the 17th of July, Marlborough struck away to a very different part of the lines, having fixed his point of attack between Leuwe and Heilisheim. The troops were acquainted with their march only an hour or two beforehand; and the different corps composing the strong detachment were unknown to each other. Overkirk was called across the Mehaigne after the English had been set in motion, and he was to follow as silently and secretly as possible. During the darkness a momentary confusion occurred in the line of march; but on the approach of dawn the troops regained their order, and at 4 A.M. the heads of the columns approached the French works. At this moment a thick fog arose and concealed their movements. Without waiting to construct bridges or to throw in fascines, the English troops rushed down a slippery bank, waded across the stream called the Little Gheet, forced their way over every other obstacle, and got a firm footing

within these formidable lines. The flight of the French outposts, who were taken completely by surprise, soon brought up the Marquis d'Allegre with twenty battalions and fifty squadrons. The French opened a heavy cannonade.

Marlborough, who had crossed over with his first squadrons, headed a charge which was brilliant and successful; but d'Allegre rallied his men, massed his squadrons, and then charging in far superior force drove in our cavalry. This was the moment of crisis; Marlborough, being on the flank, got separated from his troops, and was surrounded by the enemy, when he had with him only a trumpeter and a servant. A French or Bavarian officer struck at him with his sword; but in the desperate effort he threw himself out of the saddle, and was that instant seized by the bold trumpeter. The duke's staff galloped up and disengaged him from the *melée*. With renewed fury our cavalry charged once more: the French horse were completely routed; their infantry moved off as if panic-stricken; and Marlborough remained undisputed master of the lines. The Dutch troops of Overkirk approached, crossed the Little Gheet, and united with those of Marlborough; but they came too late to have any share in the hard fighting.

The unhappy Elector of Bavaria was with Villeroi near Namur, and these two chiefs had spent an anxious night in full expectation of some daring attack of the English general on that point. On finding out their mistake in the morning, they rushed with all the cavalry they could collect to the scene of action; but the blow was struck before they could arrive, and nothing was left them but to gallop back with the discomfited squadrons of d'Allegre, and to evacuate immediately the lines which they had so long held, and upon which they had spent much labour and money. The enemy appear never once to have looked behind them, or to have taken any rest. At eight in the evening their van was in the suburbs of Louvain, and the

whole night was spent in passing the Dyle; nor did they consider themselves safe until they had broken down the bridges, and established themselves behind that river, with their left protected by the near cannon of Louvain.

Thus, in the briefest time and under the most discouraging circumstances, the Meuse was recovered and the enemy driven from their famous lines. To those who complimented Marlborough on his exploits, he replied with a smile, "Gentlemen, all is well, but much is yet to be done."

Something more he would have done immediately after the flight of d'Allegre; but the Dutch generals insisted that their troops were too much fatigued by the forced march they had made to undertake another forced march that same day. The duke, therefore, could not advance farther than Tirlemont, in the vicinity of which place he encamped that evening. On the morrow he approached Louvain, and fixed his head-quarters at the abbey of Vlierbeck.

As d'Allegre had gone off so quickly, many of the enemy were not left on the field; but a great number of officers of rank were captured, and 1,200 prisoners were surprised at Tirlemont and other places. On the evening after the affair, the duke at Tirlemont wrote joyously to his wife, "My dearest soul, this bearer, Durel, will acquaint you with the blessing God has been pleased to give me; for I have this morning forced the enemy's lines, and beaten a good part of their army, taken their cannon, two lieutenant-generals and two major-generals, and a great many of their officers, besides standards and colours, of all which I shall have a perfect account to-morrow. It is impossible to say too much good of the troops that were with me, for never men fought better. Having marched all night, and taken a good deal of pains this day, my blood is so hot that I can hardly hold my pen, so that you will, my dearest life, excuse me if I say no more, but that I would not let you

know my design of attacking the lines by the last post, fearing it might give you uneasiness; and now, my dearest soul, my heart is so full of joy for this good success, that should I write more I should say a great many follies."

On the same evening he wrote to Lord Godolphin, "As I had in this action no troops with me but such as I brought from the Moselle, I believe the French will not like to fight with them again. This bearer will tell you that M. Overkirk's army was not in the lines till the whole action was over, and that I was forced to cheat them into this action; for they did not believe I would really attack the lines. But this is what must not be spoken of, for it would anger the Dutch, with whom, I think, at this time, I am very well; for their deputies made me the compliment this afternoon, that if I had not been here, the lines would not have been forced."

He had, however, no wish to have his movements dependent on Dutch deputies and Dutch generals, or to continue united with that army. "I think," said he, "that it is for the benefit of the service to continue separate in two armies; for mine, that is much the bigger, *does whatever I will have them do, and the others have got the ill custom of doing nothing but by a council of war.*"

Marlborough was not of the "Go on!" but of the "Come along my boys!" school; whenever it was needful, he headed his men, and exposed his person as much as the poorest trooper or commonest soldier in the line. With such troops as he commanded, the necessity did not often occur; and when it did not, he kept the position proper for a commander-in-chief. If British troops dislike shirking, or any superfluous care of self-preservation in an officer, they equally dislike anything like gasconade or unnecessary foolhardiness; their instinct, aided by very little practice, teaches them the right post and suitable conduct for their general, and they never need the extra-excitement which the troops of some continental nations appear to require.

It was natural, however, that the duchess, Lord Godolphin, and other friends, should express their anxiety on learning the duke's dangers in the heady fight. To comfort his wife, he now wrote, "My dearest soul, I love you so well, and have set my heart so entirely on ending my days in quiet with you, that you may be so far at ease as to be assured that I never venture myself but when I think the service of my queen and country requires it. Besides, I am now at an age when I find no heat in my blood that gives me temptation to expose myself out of vanity; but as I would deserve and keep the kindness of this army, I must let them see that when I expose them, I would not exempt myself."

In England, the victory within the French lines was celebrated by a *Te Deum*, like the battle of Blenheim, and the queen went in person to St. Paul's. At Berlin, Vienna, Turin, and nearly every European capital, rejoicings were made, and letters of congratulation written to the duke.*

But disappointment and chagrin again visited the mind of the great soldier. He would, immediately, have forced the passage of the Dyle, and have driven the French from their encampment; but the Dutch, who were to follow him, would not be got ready, nor could the promised supplies be procured in time. Then there set in nine days of heavy rain, which swelled the river and the numerous streams with which the country is intersected, broke up the roads, and drowned all the meadows, by which the army was to have advanced to the Dyle. Thus, the French were allowed time to recover from their consternation; and this good plan, like so many others, was frustrated by circumstances which Marlborough could not bend to his will. Fertile in resources, he at once made a new plan. This was to march round the sources of the Dyle (as the Duke of Wellington, in the campaign of 1813, went round by the sources of the

* See letters and despatches in the works of General Sir George Murray and Archdeacon Coxe. Burnet.

Ebro), and to fall unexpectedly upon the positions of the enemy on the Ische. With difficulty, the States-General consented to this bold movement; and then they, or their agents, kept the army waiting, day after day, for supplies.

At last, on the 13th of August, the bread arrived in camp; and as this day was the anniversary of the battle of Blenheim, it was held as a day of thanksgiving. At this juncture, Baron Sparre, who commanded a detached force on the side of Bergen-op-Zoom, broke through the French lines, between Ghent and Bruges, and made an irruption into Brabant; and, though compelled soon to retire before superior numbers, he created great confusion in Villeroi's army, and obtained his object, which was merely to distract the attention of the enemy. While French columns were moving against Sparre, Marlborough broke up his camp; and, leaving garrisons at Tirlemont and Diest, he began to ascend the Dyle. On the 15th of August, he was marching between Meldert and the abbey of Corbais, Overkirk moving in a line parallel with him. The march was accelerated; for intelligence was received that the enemy expected to be reinforced, on the 18th, by a strong detachment from their army on the Moselle; and Marlborough hoped to reach them before the junction should take place. On the 16th, the confederates arrived at Genappe, having performed an extraordinary march, through a difficult country, without making a single mistake. As usual, the duties of the quartermaster-general's department had been well executed. The men were in high spirits, for they knew that they should close with the French. Here, at Genappe, beyond the sources of the Dyle, the allies were united in one line of battle, and under one command. On the 17th, they again moved, and, approaching the borders of the forest of Soignies, they encamped between Hulpen and Braine l'Alleu, the head-quarters being at Fischermont. Here are familiar names, rendered for ever memorable by Wellington's short and glorious campaign in the Netherlands in 1815.

In the interim, the French had taken the alarm, and, abandoning the Dyle, had established themselves, in full force, behind the Ische, their front being protected by that stream, and their right and rear by the forest of Soignies. In this position, they hoped to cover the city of Brussels.

The French being still in the confusion of changing camp, Marlborough would immediately force the passage of the river. Guides were procured, and peasants brought up, who were willing to work, and knew all the fords of the Ische, and the condition of its banks. That same evening, a detachment of twenty battalions and twenty squadrons, under the command of General Churchill, was posted in front, to commence the attack by skirting the borders of the forest, and turning the right flank of the enemy. A French detachment now occupied WATERLOO, at the entrance of the forest; but, at the approach of our picquets, they retreated into the wood. They, however, re-appeared in the evening, and an alarm was suddenly spread that their whole army was advancing in that direction. The duke was thus called from his quarters, where he had retired to repose, after his great exertions, both of body and mind. On riding to the spot, he found the alarm to be false; but it deprived him of three hours rest, at a time when rest was doubly necessary.*

The next movement would bring the army in presence of the enemy. Preparations were, therefore, made for action; and but for the vexatious and almost maddening conduct of the Dutch, Marlborough would have gained a great victory at Waterloo one hundred and ten years before that plain became the scene of the crowning victory of Wellington.

At daybreak the allied army was put in motion. There was, as Marlborough's most careful biographer says, malice, timidity, ignorance, and treachery in the allied camp, as well

* Archdeacon Coxe.

as something which looked very like downright cowardice. General Slangenberg, who more than any other man had thwarted him on the Dyle, was now more than ever a thorn in his side. The artillery was not up in time, because Slangenberg, contrary to the strictest injunctions, had mixed his baggage with the train. The French could not be surprised and broken at one of the weakest points, which Marlborough had skilfully selected, because Slangenberg raised difficulties, and because his cursed baggage-wagons still impeded the progress of the guns. The Dutch troops, or at least many of their officers, were evidently dejected, because Slangenberg had been diluting their scheidam with his cold ditch-water—had been telling them that Marlborough was leading them to destruction.

The French were now massing in front, and opening a fire of artillery; they were no longer to be taken at the disadvantage in which they were an hour or two previously; but still there was time to fight, for it was only noonday, and the guns of the allies were now up and ready, and the troops had fallen into line. As Marlborough cantered along the line, he met those birds of ill omen the Dutch deputies or field-commissioners. In his heart he must have wished them at the bottom of the Zuyder Zee; but he accosted them with smiles, cheerfully congratulating them on the prospect of a sure success, and pressed them to give orders for the advance of their troops. The cold-blooded deputies replied, “Your highness will, doubtless, allow us time to request the opinion of our own generals.” “*Soit, mais messieurs, depechez vous,*” said Marlborough (So be it, but, gentlemen, be quick). These gentlemen were so slow, that at three o’clock in the afternoon, they and their generals were still deliberating on the height of Over-Ische. The duke rode impatiently to the spot and thus addressed them, in a speech which was, for him, of very unusual length and vivacity:—

“Gentlemen, I have reconnoitred the ground, and made

dispositions for an attack.* I am convinced that conscientiously, and as men of honour, we cannot now retire without an action. Should we neglect this opportunity, we must be responsible before God and man. You see the confusion which pervades the ranks of the enemy, and their embarrassment at our manœuvres. I leave you to judge whether we should attack to-day, or wait till to-morrow. It is, indeed, late; but you must consider that, by throwing up entrenchments during the night, the enemy will render their position far more difficult to force."

Instead of responding like men and patriots, the deputies murmured and their generals murmured. And then Slangenberg—who ought to have been hanged, not *shot*, at the head of his own columns,—stepped forward and said, in a tone of dogged insolence:—"Since I have been led to this place without any previous communication of the design, I will give no other opinion than that the passage at Over-Ische is *impracticable*. However, I am ready to obey the orders which I may receive." The duke, affecting not to notice the malice and insolence of the speech, turned to Slangenberg and said, in his calm, mild manner:—"I am happy to have under my command an officer of your courage and skill, and I flatter myself that, in a situation which requires instant decision, you will start no difficulties, but direct the attack." The scoundrel's only reply was, "Murder and massacre!" "If you would spare the Dutch troops," said Marlborough, "take two English for every Dutch battalion." "I do not understand the English language," said Slangenberg, with a sneer. "Well," rejoined Marlborough, "you understand German; take the Hessians; take, take all the German regiments!" "I repeat that this affair is *impracticable*," said Slangenberg.

* In this reconnoissance, Marlborough had ridden so closely to the enemy's weak point that he had been saluted with several cannon-shot, and had nearly been hit. He had said, "Ha! these gentlemen do not choose to have this spot too narrowly inspected."

Marlborough's fire was now roused. "Gentlemen," said he, "I disdain to send troops to dangers which I will not myself encounter! I will lead in person where the danger is greatest." He then adjured the deputies, by God and their country, not to neglect so favourable an opportunity. But there was no striking fire from mud and dirt; the deputies and generals, standing in a ring, resumed their stupid deliberations, Marlborough standing by in an evident agony of impatience.

When two more precious hours had been thus consumed, the opinion of Slangenberg prevailed; and it was decided that the enemy were too advantageously posted to be attacked at Over-Ische. Some, however, owned that they could form no judgment as to the other points of the French position, as they had not examined them.

To remove this last objection, three generals, Slangenberg, Tilly, and Salisch, were sent to reconnoitre, and were accompanied by Brigadier Bothmar and Quartermaster-general Stark, brave and active men both, who, at the earnest desire of the duke, attended to shew them the ground. This survey proved a new source of cavil. Every post occupied by the enemy was deemed too strong by the Dutchmen: the river, where it was easy to be passed, was declared to be not fordable; the most trifling elevation was set down as inaccessible to cavalry. In vain did Bothmar and Stark reason, and then wrangle. "Look at our superiority of numbers," said Stark. Slangenberg drew from his pocket what he called the French order of battle, and pretended to shew that both in battalions and in squadrons the enemy far exceeded the confederates. They were still disputing when the darkness of night set in.

Without waiting the result of this Dutch survey, Marlborough indignantly retired to his quarters. He, no doubt, felt assured that Slangenberg would find excuses for not attacking anywhere — for not fighting at all; but when Bothmar appeared, and announced the result of the survey,

the duke exclaimed, "I am at this moment *ten* years older than I was ten days ago!"

On the following morning, an official report was handed to the duke, stating the opinions of Slangenberg, Tilly, and Salisch, and adding, that the attack was now still more hopeless than on the preceding day, as the enemy had profited by the night to increase their means of defence. In silent sorrow, Marlborough quitted a spot which he had confidently hoped to illustrate by a victory no less splendid than that of Blenheim; and withdrew to Lower Wavre, where he rejoined his baggage, and finished a letter to his wife. "We shall march again in retreat to-morrow, for we cannot stay longer in this country than the bread we brought with us will give us leave." So said the duke, who knew that very little of the bread was left. He added, "I fully believe I should have engaged the enemy as yesterday, which I certainly had done if it had been in my power. But all the Dutch generals, except M. Overkirk, were against it, so that the deputies would not consent to our engaging, notwithstanding we were in battle-array within cannon-shot of the enemy; and I do assure you that our army was at least one-third stronger than theirs. We are now returning, for we cannot stay longer than the bread we have brought with us will give us leave. It is impossible to make the war with advantage at this rate. I have sent a copy of my letter to the States, to the lord-treasurer. I should have writ in a very angry style, but I was afraid it might give the French an advantage."

On the same evening, he wrote to Lord Godolphin:—"Several prisoners whom we have taken since, as well as the deserters, assure us that they should have made no more defence but such as might have given them time to have drawn the army towards Brussels, where all their baggage was already gone. By this you may imagine how I am vexed, seeing very plainly that the people I am joined with will never do anything. * * * * *

You will see by the enclosed that, after four days' march, I found the enemy encamped as I expected, so that I thought we should have had a very glorious day. But as the deputies would not consent without first consulting the generals, who were all against it, except M. Overkirk, we have been obliged to retire from the enemy, notwithstanding we were at least one-third stronger than they, which I take to be very prejudicial to the common cause, and scandalous for the army. I think this will shew very plainly, that it is next to impossible to act offensively with this army, so governed as they are; for when their general and I agree, as we did in this, that it shall be in the power of subaltern generals to hinder the execution, is against all discipline. This last action of the Dutch generals has given us great mortification; for the enemy will see very plainly that they have nothing to fear on this side, nor can I ever serve with them without losing the little reputation I have; for in most countries they think I have power in this army to do what I please. I beg you will give my duty to the queen, and assure her, that if I had had the same power I had the last year, I should have had a greater victory than that of Blenheim, in my opinion; for the French were so posted, that if we had beat them they could not have got to Brussels."*

¶ In the first transport of his resentment, Marlborough had declared to his friends in England, and to some of his friends in Holland, that he would no longer hold a command in which he could be so scandalously disobeyed; that he would quit the allied army and go home, to return no more into the Netherlands. To his wife he said, "Pray, press on my house and garden, for I think I shall never stir from my own home again!" Queen Anne's ministers implored him to alter this resolution, intimating that they could nowhere find another soldier and statesman proper to fill his

* Correspondence as given from the original letters and despatches by Coxe and Sir G. Murray.

place. Harley wrote to him:—"The knowledge your grace has of the government of that country, of their humours, their factions, and the particular inclinations and dispositions of the several great men there, with their respective interests and attachments; with that clearness of understanding and penetration of which your grace is so great a master; make everybody here justly depend upon your direction in this critical affair." Ministers offered to despatch Lord Pembroke, the president of the council, from London to the Hague, to remonstrate with the States-General, and to procure the removal from the army of such officers as Slangenberg. The queen, with her own hand, wrote a strong letter to the States, and other measures were adopted to soothe Marlborough's irritation.

In the mean while the allied army had retraced their steps to Meldert, where head-quarters were fixed on the 30th of August. On the 2nd of September, the duke advanced to Tirlemont, received the surrender of Lcuwe, the only place on the southern part of the lines which was as yet held by the French, and ordered the entire demolition of the lines from that place to the Melaigue. The erasure of this formidable barrier would facilitate his future progress, provided only he should not be again impeded by deputies and Dutch generals.

As for the present, the French could not be attacked anywhere, the Duke went for a short time to Spa to recruit his impaired health by drinking the mineral waters. His amiable, humane, sympathizing disposition must have clearly appeared from the quotations already given, and innumerable other proofs of it will be found in his private correspondence. He felt for every wrong or woe that came under his notice. At this moment he deeply interested himself in a love-story, which could not run smooth unless a French prisoner of rank, in England, were released. He wrote to the lord-treasurer:—"The enclosed is a letter from a young woman of quality, that is in love with the

Comte de Lyon. He is at Litchfield. I am assured that it is a very virtuous love, and that when they can get their parents' consent they are to be married. *As I do from my heart wish that nobody were unhappy*, I own to you that the lady's letter has made me wish him in France; so that if he might have leave for four months, without prejudice to her Majesty's service, I should be glad of it; but if you think it should not be done, you will then be pleased not to speak to the queen of it." *

We have not Lord Godolphin's reply to this application; but the court could not refuse such a request, made in so feeling and pretty a manner; and there can be little doubt that the duke had the satisfaction of seeing the captive lover sent over to the continent.

In this interval Slangenberg was not only removed from the army, but all his attempts to obtain an official employment were frustrated; the Dutch minister in England was instructed to make an ample apology to the British cabinet; and Buys, pensionary of Amsterdam, met Marlborough at Turnhout, to conclude a satisfactory arrangement.

Still the Dutch shrunk from any great military enterprise, and many of them appeared to be lukewarm in the cause. "On the whole," said the duke, "I find they would be glad to content me; but I am afraid would be glad also to have it still in their power to hinder a battle, for they do seem to apprehend very much the consequences of such a venture." †

What rendered the lukewarmness the more suspicious was the fact, perfectly known to Marlborough, that the French king had now offered a separate peace to the Dutch on very advantageous terms. It was to be dreaded that the selfishness of some, and the French partialities of others, would drive the States-General into this treaty, and so be a cause of the breaking-up of the grand alliance.

* Letter as given by Archdeacon Coxe.

† Letter to the Lord Treasurer.

These thoughts, even more than military matters, now occupied the mind of the duke, whose genius for diplomacy, we must repeat, quite equalled his genius for war.

On the 28th of September, the allied camp was pitched at Herenthals; and, forthwith, that camp became a sort of congress, or the scene of the diplomatic negotiations which influenced the fortune of the war, and the fate of Europe. Here he knew that numerous misgivings, jealousies, and conflicting interests, views, and projects, had to be reconciled; and truly marvellous was the temper and skill of Marlborough in effecting this reconciliation. At the same time his attention was daily called to the war in the Upper Rhine, where the Margrave of Baden was again doing something; to the war in Spain, where Lord Peterborough was serving with a small English army; to the war in Hungary, where the Imperialists were frequently foiled; and to the war in Upper Italy, where his only compeer, Prince Eugene, had to contend against a very superior French force, and against hard pecuniary difficulties. In every direction the duke sent good advice; but to his friend, Prince Eugene, he sent 7,000 Prussian troops, which he had procured the means of subsidizing.

As the best or the only means of removing various obstacles and difficulties, the emperor earnestly implored for the presence of Marlborough at Vienna, were it only for two or three days. Though anxious to be at home, the duke consented to undertake this journey, being authorized and requested so to do by his own government. We give one of the two earnest letters of the emperor to the duke:—

“Vienna, September 27th, 1705.

“**MOST ILLUSTRIOUS COUSIN AND DEAREST PRINCE,**—Although I do not doubt but you have fully understood, from my last letter, the desire I had to deliberate with you here in person, and particularly to confer with you on the operations of the next campaign; yet such is the weight

and consequence of this affair, that I cannot conceal from you, that as your presence is the chief hinge on which the main stress of the war now turns, so the greatest part of my consolation, as well as the life and hopes of the confederates depend thereon. I cannot deny that your most serene queen will very soon have occasion for the presence of so great a man; yet I have no reason to doubt that her generosity will readily spare so little a time as this journey will take up, to me and the common cause. The delay will be amply recompensed by the advantage of the counsels which, from your great prudence and experience, you will be able to give. I do, therefore, again kindly entreat you to undertake this journey, notwithstanding it may seem somewhat troublesome; and to embrace this opportunity of adding new lustre to your name, already so renowned through the world, and augmenting the many and great obligations you have laid on my august family, and the common cause of the allies.

“I conclude with constant assurances of my most kind affection.

“P.S.—I refer you for the rest, to what Count Wratislaw will communicate to you on my part, not deeming it expedient to insert it in this letter. I merely intend by these lines to renew my sentiments of friendship and esteem, and to notify to you the great obligation you will confer on me, if you will repair to this place, as, without your presence, nothing that may be concerted for the approaching campaign can be good.”*

Before commencing his journey to the Austrian capital, the duke repaired to the Hague to confer with the States-General. “In his absence from the army,” says one who was in the camp, “we were a body without a soul. The French having thrown down a little of their line, and laid a

* Translation from the original document, in the Marlborough Papers, in Latin, and the postscript in French.

bridge over the Nethe for convenience of forage, we were in perpetual alarms, as if an inferior, dispirited army, would leave their lines to attack us, because the duke had left us."

On the 20th of October, the duke returned to camp, and marched on to a position on the Scheldt, to cover the siege of Sandbliet. On the 26th of October, he finally quitted the army, leaving Overkirk to finish the siege, and distribute the troops into winter quarters. -

He passed through Dusseldorf, Frankfort, and Ratisbon, being hailed by all ranks with the admiration he merited. At Ratisbon he embarked on the Danube, and was conveyed in a splendid yacht to Vienna, where he arrived on the 12th of November. Here he expected to meet Prince Eugene, but to his great regret, his friend was still retained at the army by the critical state of affairs in Italy. He was received with all the honours and distinctions which could be conferred on a subject. The emperor sent him his portrait richly set in precious stones, and with his own hand presented him a diamond ring of considerable value. Besides granting public audiences, the emperor went to meet him when he visited the museum or cabinet of rarities, and profited by that opportunity to express his sentiments with greater cordiality and warmth than the etiquette of court ceremony permitted. "Heir," he said, "of my father's throne, I inherit also his gratitude towards the conqueror of Blenheim. Your highness's services to the common cause in general, and to my family in particular, can never be erased from my memory, nor ever be forgotten by my family or my posterity."*

During his short stay at Vienna, though suffering a part of the time from an attack of gout, Marlborough despatched an immensity of political and other business, which must have occupied old formalists and ordinary negotiators for weeks or even months. He arranged the conditions of a new alliance between the maritime powers and the house of

* Lediard's Life.

Austria, which had been deranged by the death of the Emperor Leopold; he obtained assurances from the emperor that he would grant fair and honourable terms to the Hungarian insurgents, in order to extinguish a civil war, which had hitherto crippled his efforts in the common cause; he made up a quarrel which had arisen between the King of Prussia and the emperor, and obviated another quarrel which was breaking out between Prussia and England; he reconciled the emperor and the Dutch, and as a proof of the zeal of the States-General, he announced their ready concurrence with England in a promised loan, and in sending reinforcements to Prince Eugene in Italy. "My journey hither," said he, "has been of some use, in letting the emperor see that his affairs will not allow of his quarrelling with Holland, for that would end only in giving advantage to France."* But in every way, his journey was of use, and the temper he displayed in these multifarious negotiations most admirable. In diplomacy Vienna was to him what Blenheim was in war. He gained the warm personal friendship of every statesman with whom he came in contact, and from this time the Austrian prime minister, the Prince of Salme, whom he had not before met, took him into his entire confidence, and became his frequent correspondent.

"Conscious that an immediate supply was necessary to equip and forward the troops destined for Italy, Marlborough did not suffer himself to be shackled by financial considerations. In virtue of the authority with which he was invested, he not only pledged himself for the loan, but on his own credit, and in the name of Holland and England, he induced the bankers of Vienna to make an immediate advance of 100,000 crowns for the more pressing exigencies of the service. He likewise promised to exert his influence in providing another loan of 250,000*l.* at 7 per cent. on the

* Letter to Lord Godolphin, dated Vienna, Nov. 14th.

mortgage of the mines of Silesia, which on his arrival in England he accomplished.”*

The offer of a German principality by the late Emperor Leopold to Marlborough has been mentioned. The Emperor Joseph, who had since repeated the offer, now conferred the dignity of prince of the empire on the duke, and all his heirs and descendants whether male or female. He and his heirs male were to be admitted to a place at the assemblies of the Germanic diet, either by themselves or their plenipotentiaries, in the same manner as other princes of the empire, with the right of voting, and other privileges and prerogatives enjoyed by the princes of the Holy Roman empire. This was accompanied by a permission to the duke-prince to bear his arms on the breast of the imperial eagle, surmounted with a coronet, “as a memorial to the latest posterity of imperial gratitude and meritorious services.” This patent was dated November 14th 1705. On the 17th, by another patent, bearing that date, Joseph created the lordship of Mindelheim a principality of the empire, to be conferred on the Duke of Marlborough, and made revertible to his legitimate male heirs. By a third patent of the 18th, he, as head of the house of Austria, transferred the new principality to Marlborough.

The principality of Mindelheim derived its name from an old castle and town situated on the river Mindel, in Suabia. It had been the scene of many contests arising out of the baronial feuds of the middle ages, and during the thirty years war, the town had been thrice taken and pillaged, and the old castle burned. The poor people of the district appear to have rejoiced at being transferred to the great English nobleman. The length of the territory was six leagues, and the breadth from three to four. The clear yearly revenue was estimated at about 20,000 German florins. To this might be added certain seignorial rights, a small duty on saltpetre found in the country, &c. The

* Archdeacon Cox.

territory was agreeably situated, the air healthy, and the soil fertile. It consisted of arable pasture and forest, was rich in all sorts of corn, well stocked with cattle, and abounding with deer and wild boars. The people were industrious, and would have been in good circumstances, had they not been exhausted by frequent wars. The greater part of them were labourers or breeders of cattle.*

So many calls were made on the bounty of the duke and duchess, and the yearly revenue was so very irregularly paid, that the principality of Mindelheim could have added but little to Marlborough's fortune. The title of prince, and admission into the diet, conferred no additional rank or precedence in England; but it is believed that abroad it proved of essential advantage in increasing his influence and high consideration. In Germany, at least, he was a sovereign prince among sovereign princes, and if his dominions were narrow, there were others on dimensions quite as limited.

Before leaving Vienna, the duke received several letters from Prince Eugene, who expressed how eager he was to have again the honour and pleasure of serving in the field with him, and who imparted valuable intelligence as to the state of the war in Italy, and the state of politics in other countries. Neither of these two great commanders ever doubted that France could be confined to her proper limits, if the confederates would only be true to themselves, and firm in the common cause. Even in moments of adversity and defeat, Eugene smiled at the idea of French invincibility, which had so long and mischievously prevailed all over the continent.

From Vienna, the duke repaired to Berlin, where, on the very evening of his arrival, he held a private conference with the king, who, violent and capricious as he was, was

* Description of Mindelheim, transmitted to the duke by Dr. Heyland, who accompanied Mr. Stepney in the ceremonial of taking possession.—Archdeacon Coxe's *Memoirs*.

completely subdued by his gentleness, and steadiness of temper. Though very sparing of his gifts, the king gave to the duke a sword, enriched with diamonds.

"No man," says Southey, "possessed a greater perfection in the art of bringing difficult negotiations to the termination which he desired; and this was owing, not more to the clearness of his judgment, and the quickness of his comprehensive mind, than to his native courtesy, and to that genuine candour which men are, in some degree, led to imitate, when they feel and admire it. Moreover, the rank which Marlborough held in the eyes of all Europe—for no subject had ever before stood so conspicuously eminent in modern times—had its imposing effect."*

Marlborough's next visit was to Hanover. Here he had to encounter sundry strong prejudices, arising out of Queen Anne's jealousy of her successor, and her decided opposition to a visit to England, which the young elector proposed to make. The duke, however, conquered these prejudices, and compelled that electoral court to declare that "his manners were as obliging and polished, as his actions were glorious and admirable."

The duke returned to the Hague on the 11th of December, to rouse the Dutch out of the easy slumber into which they had again fallen, to arrange with the States the measures for augmenting the confederate army, to obtain the payment of the loan to the Court of Vienna, and to raise funds for the allied troops serving on the coast of Spain. The English parliament, besides making liberal grants for the war in the Low Countries, had voted supplies for the augmentation of 10,000 men, to be employed in Italy; for 10,000 men, in Portugal; and for 5,000 more, in Catalonia; and very soon, additional succour, in men and money, were also voted. This liberality, however, had slight effect on the phlegmatic Dutch, who kept constantly seeking some pretext or other for delay. On Christmas-day, when, at the

* Quarterly Review, vol. xxiii.

very latest, the duke had hoped to be with his family, in England, a little irritability was inevitable. The weather was uncommonly cold; and dense fogs kept at a distance the ships which were to have convoyed him. "If I should have no news of the convoy," said he, "I shall be obliged to come over in the common packet-boat, or be frozen up in this country, for at this time it freezes very hard; but of this I say nothing, fearing they might hear it at Dunkirk."* In the end, however, the States-General agreed to all that was proposed to them, and made some immediate advances of money. Having settled this difficult business, and arranged a new treaty with the Elector Palatine, who was to furnish 10,000 men, to be paid by England and Holland, he quitted the continent, and arrived in London towards the middle of the month of January 1706. "I never," says Bishop Burnet, "knew the Duke of Marlborough go out so full of hopes as in the beginning of the campaign of 1705; but things had not answered his expectations. The Prince of Baden's conduct, through this whole matter, was liable to censure: the worst suspicion was, that he was corrupted by the French. Those who did not carry their censures so far, attributed his acting as he did to his pride, and thought he, envying the Duke of Marlborough, and apprehending that the whole glory of the campaign would be ascribed to him, since he had the stronger army, chose rather to defeat the whole design than see another carry away the chief honour of any successes that might have happened."†

Yet, if we set aside the failure of the campaign on the Moselle, and the *bataille manquée* at Waterloo—for neither of which events the duke was in the slightest degree answerable—the year 1705 was one of the busiest and most glorious in his remarkable life. His rapid return from the

* The privateers of Dunkirk had not unfrequently captured English officers on their passage, when unprotected by convoy.

† History of his Own Times.

Moselle to the Meuse, the quick and masterly manner in which he cleared the whole of the latter river, his breaking through the lines of the French, and his driving them, broken and dispirited, beyond the Dyle, were all brilliant and beautiful operations in war; and to these must be added, his incessant political labours, and the diplomatic successes he obtained wherever he presented himself. His fatigues of mind and body had been excessive. "It is very fortunate for us, sir," said a near friend, "that he can bear what he does; for, without any compliment to him, he is the life and soul of everything here abroad; and, without him, the whole confederacy would be in confusion."*

Nor could Marlborough take much repose during his short stay in England. Home politics called for his attention; and he engaged, with Godolphin, in realizing their favourite scheme, of effecting a reconciliation between contending parties, and so bringing about a friendly parliamentary coalition. For the present, these efforts seemed to be crowned with success; but Harley, and St. John, and many others, were insincere in their professions; and intrigues were now set on foot which, a few years later, aided by new royal partialities, and other circumstances, proved fatal to the ascendancy of Marlborough and Godolphin.

On the 25th of April 1706, Marlborough was again at the Hague. The state of foreign affairs was rather gloomy. In Spain, a few brilliant successes on the part of the allies had been followed by checks and reverses; in Italy, Prince Eugene was still overmatched by the French; on the Upper Rhine, the Margrave of Baden was displaying his usual frowardness and procrastination; in the Netherlands, the Dutch had not collected sufficient forces for offensive operations against the French.

Marlborough's heart was beyond the Alps: he was earnestly longing to make a campaign in Italy with Prince Eugene; a plan for such a campaign had been duly prepared

* Letter from Lord Sunderland to the duchess.

and approved of by the English government;* but the situation of affairs in Germany and the Netherlands prevented his moving for the present. The King of Prussia and the Elector of Hanover, again in ill humour, withheld their troops; the King of Denmark would not send his valuable cavalry anywhere until certain arrears of subsidy should be paid to him; and, on similar grounds, the Landgrave of Hesse stopped his brave battalions as they were marching to join the duke. All were averse to a project which would carry their troops so far away as Italy, and the States-General dreaded another invasion of their own country, if Marlborough and so large a force should leave them.

While the duke was in vain labouring to overcome the objections of Prussia, Denmark, and Hesse, and while he was concerting with Overkirk the means of maintaining a defensive campaign in the Netherlands during his proposed absence in Italy, Marshal Villars, who had not been sleeping on the Upper Rhine, like the Margrave of Baden, suddenly took the field, and being reinforced with a corps from the Netherlands under Marsin, forced the German lines on the Motter, drove the margrave back to the Lauter, took the margrave's principal magazines, reduced Drusenheim and Haguenau, and was preparing to overrun the unfortunate Palatinate.

This intelligence doubled the fears of the Dutch, and they became more than ever anxious for the protection of Marlborough and the British forces. A veil fell on the sunny prospect of Italy. The Dutch could not be left in danger; and they now offered to relieve the British commander from the shackles which had hitherto confined him, by secretly giving him the choice of the field deputies, or by privately enjoining those functionaries to conform implicitly

* The Instructions for the Duke, in the handwriting of Secretary Harley, exist in the Archives at Blenheim, and are referred to by Archdeacon Coxe.

to the general's orders.* This concession, coupled with the impossibility of obtaining an efficient army for any other quarter, induced Marlborough, though with unconcealed reluctance, to abandon his design on Italy.

By the 11th of May, the duke was with the confederate army, which had been directed to assemble near Tongres. The French appeared determined to remain quietly behind their lines on the Dyle, which they had re-formed and strengthened; and our soldiers looked for an inactive, sluggish, and inglorious campaign, among ditches, canals, and rivers, of the very names of which they were sick at heart.

Brighter prospects, however, soon opened. The duke had established a secret correspondence with one Pasquier, an inhabitant of Namur, and hoped, through that man's agency, to surprise that fortress. The capture of Namur would turn the flank of the French lines, and completely spoil their defensive system. Should the duke fail in taking the fortress, or should the French army move to defend it, he might have the desired opportunity of bringing them to a general engagement. "If they will come out and fight," said he, "I shall beat them; for my people are full of spirit." With these views Marlborough advanced to Tirlemont.

Never was plan more successful. Fearing for the safety of Namur, the French court sent Villeroi positive orders to risk a battle. At the same time Marsin was recalled from the Upper Danube, and instructed to make forced marches with his cavalry, in order to join Villeroi before the day of action. Well knowing that the Hanoverians, Hessians, and Danes had not yet joined Marlborough, Villeroi and the Elector of Bavaria quitted their lines, crossed the Dyle, and advanced towards Tirlemont. The duke, delighted at their boldness, sent away to the Danes; pledged his word

* This was the practice resorted to by the States-General with William III.—at least during the latter campaigns of that great Stadtholder and King.

that their arrears should be paid forthwith ; got their promise to come on as fast as their horses would carry them ; and then began to mass and unite all his other forces.

On the 22nd of May, the confederate army was on the Little Gheet, and the Danes were only a short league in its rear. The enemy had now crossed the Great Gheet, and were moving on Judoigne. After some manœuvres, Villeroi advanced to the Mehaigne, on the bank of which river he encamped on the morning of Whit Sunday, the 23rd of May. The enemy were now in a position from which they could not be removed without a general combat. Their array was of 72,000 men, that of the allies about 70,000. Villeroi had with him mostly all King Louis's household, and with them the best troops of France ; Marlborough had been joined by the brave Danes.

Villeroi had posted himself like a blunderer, and yet felt the full assurance of success. " You are lost," cried M. de Gassion, one of his lieutenant-generals, " if you do not change your order of battle. Marlborough is quick. If you lose a moment, all will be over !" Other experienced officers, who had seen Marlborough in battle, expressed the same opinion ; but Villeroi remained as he was, with his left wing separated from his right, and so placed as to be scarcely able to act or move ; and Marlborough, who saw at a glance all the defects of his arrangement, did not allow him much time for deliberation.

At about half-past one in the afternoon, the duke commenced his attack with a tremendous fire of artillery, while the horse of his left wing, commanded and gallantly led by Overkirk, moved gradually upon the right of the enemy. Soon the Dutch guards carried the village of Tavieres, the key of Villeroi's position, intercepted reinforcements, and, by the help of the Danish horse, cut the French there in pieces, or drove them into the Mehaigne. Some fierce encounters ensued between masses of cavalry, in which the Bavarians, still steady to Louis, seem to have acted with

more bravery and stratagem than the French. But horse and foot, officers and men, on the side of the French, had lost much of their former confidence, and during the three last campaigns had seemed to contend rather for safety than for victory.

The village of Ramilies, which gave its name to the battle, was occupied in force by Villeroi, and fronted by some heavy batteries. Marlborough sent General Schultz to attack it with twelve battalions. Schultz found hard work; and then Marlborough, throwing forward column after column, and squadron after squadron, rode up in person to cheer the soldiers under a murderous fire. He was recognised by some of the French dragoons, while talking with a few of his men that had recoiled from the guns, and in a moment he was surrounded; but he put spurs to his horse, and went off at a gallop. In leaping a ditch he was thrown, and in great danger of being taken: but Captain Molesworth, one of his aides-de-camp, dismounted, and supplied him with his own horse. As Marlborough was remounting, a cannon-ball struck off the head of Colonel Bingfield, who was holding the stirrups for him; yet the fortunate general rejoined his lines in safety, with no other hurt than a bruise from his fall. His troops returned to the charge with new spirit, and the Duke of Wurtemberg and the Prince of Hesse Cassel got in Villeroi's rear. General Schultz then drove the enemy from Ramilies; and when the battle had lasted above three hours and a half, Villeroi was beaten at all points. His troops retreated with some order, till they were charged near the farm-house of Chaintrain by the regiments of General Wyndham and General Wood, when the Bavarians suffered greatly and nearly lost their elector, and when a body of Spaniards, no longer the best infantry in Europe, but perhaps the worst, were almost annihilated. From that moment all order disappeared: the troops fled without heeding their officers, and entire regiments threw

down their arms and surrendered. They were followed by the English cavalry, which captured vast numbers. Almost all the cannon and the whole of the baggage fell into the hands of the victors. Lord Orkney, with some squadrons of light horse, continued the pursuit to the vicinity of Louvain, nearly seven leagues from the field of battle; nor did Villeroi consider himself safe until he reached the walls of Brussels. He had lost, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, upwards of 13,000 men, with 80 colours and standards, and all his cannon; while Marlborough only acknowledged 1,000 killed and 2,000 wounded. By the battle of Blenheim, Marlborough had gained Bavaria and Cologne; by the battle of Ramilies, the French lost the whole of the Spanish Netherlands.

"The consequence of this battle," said Marlborough, "is likely to be greater than that of Blenheim, for we have now the whole summer before us, and, with the blessing of God, I will make the best use of it. For, *as we had no council of war before this battle, so I hope to have none this whole campaign.*" Colonel Blackader, a Cameronian fanatic, but a very brave soldier, who wrote an account of his campaigns with the duke, exclaims at this juncture, "Assuredly, the Lord hath sent a panic-fear among the French army! They are so shattered that they can hardly be kept together. The Lord is taking heart, and hand, and spirit, from our enemies."

It is said that the vain and self-confident Villeroi boasted, before the battle began, that he would shew how much better a general he was than Marshal Villars; and that, after the battle was lost, he could not, for five whole days, summon up heart enough to write a letter, or send a courier to the king his master.

In the battle of Ramilies, where the British troops had rather less of the hard fighting than usually fell to their share, the Dutch troops behaved with great gallantry as well as steadiness, and their leader, Overkirk, had his

narrow escape as well as Marlborough. He had fought at the head of the Dutch troops, and continued on horseback till one in the morning, when a Bavarian captain of horse was made prisoner. Overkirk kindly returned his sword to the captain, saying, "You are a gentleman, and may keep it." The Bavarian, in treachery, or in a fit of mad fury, rode at the general with his drawn sword, and was only prevented from stabbing him in the back by Overkirk's groom, or orderly, who shot him dead on the spot.

Marlborough was on horseback from the dawn of day till a late hour of the night; but early on the following morning he was writing to his wife and to Lord Godolphin. His accounts of the battle were very brief:—"The first half-hour was very doubtful; but after that we had full success in our attacks." In both of these letters he mentioned "poor Bingfield," with a feeling that still does him honour. To the duchess he said, "Poor Bingfield, holding my stirrup for me, and helping me on horseback, was killed. I am told that he leaves his wife and mother in a poor condition." To the premier he said, "Poor Bingfield is killed, and I am told he leaves his wife and mother in a bad condition." The lord-treasurer made haste to inform him, that the queen would not fail to take care of poor Bingfield's widow, etc. This cheered the heart of Marlborough, which was always most tender in such cases.

The humanity he displayed towards his prisoners deserves also to be recorded. The sick and wounded were lodged in hospitals, and treated with the same care and attention as the troops of the allies; the prisoners were supplied with all the comforts which their situation required, and they were conveyed into Holland with the sympathy and respect due to brave men in misfortune. "The Duke of Marlborough," says a French writer, "always shewed the utmost attention to his prisoners, and set the example of

that humanity which has since soothed the horrors and calamities of war.”*

The victory of Ramilies excited as much enthusiasm in England as the victory of Blenheim had done in 1704. The queen attended the *Te Deum* at St. Paul's in the same state and solemnity, addresses were presented from all quarters, envy and malignity seemed at last to be silenced, and the name of Marlborough was mingled with that of Queen Anne in toasts and in shouts of national exultation. Yet, at this very moment, faction was at its old work; and Lord Godolphin, as prime minister, was compelled to confess that he found the greatest difficulty in carrying on the government. The attempt at reconciliation had ended only in giving political power to men who were not to be trusted, and in converting open into secret enemies, who were undermining the cabinet, even while they were members of it.

In a very short time, Louvain, Meehlin, Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, and other towns, submitted without resistance, and the people, as subjects of the Spanish monarchy, acknowledged the Austrian King Charles. Ostend, Dendermond, Ath, and Menim, made a show of holding out, but in sieges of from four days to three months duration they were all reduced. The victorious Marlborough entered Brussels in triumph in the month of October, amidst the joyful acclamations of the inhabitants, whose magistrates presented him with the keys of the town, and received him with all the honours which had been usually paid to their ancient sovereigns, the dukes of Burgundy. The emperor and King Charles made an offer of the government of the country to him who had won it

* It is curious to observe the studied, ceremonious courtesy with which the correspondence between the two commanders-in-chief was conducted. Marlborough always ended his letter by declaring himself to be Villeroi's most humble servant "with passion and the most sincere respect": Villeroi's concluding compliments were, of course, still more *outrés*.

with the sword; and Marlborough accepted the grant—which would have been as lucrative as honourable—subject to the approbation of the Queen of England: but there were various interests and views which jarred with his; and, by the obstinate opposition of the Dutch, he found himself eventually obliged to decline it.

After the battle of Ramilies, and even down to the successful termination of the siege of Ostend, Marlborough had his thoughts turned towards Italy, and entertained some hopes of joining Prince Eugene, and fighting a battle beyond the Alps, more grand and decisive than any he had yet fought. As part of his plan for the year, the English and Dutch fleets were to have scoured and alarmed the whole western coast of France, and to have landed 12,000 Dutch and English troops between Blaise and the Charente; this army was to have taken possession of the important city of Nantes, and then to have acted according to circumstances, and the good or ill disposition of the French inhabitants. If conducted with only tolerable skill, this armament must have scared the court of Versailles, have obliged it to call in troops from the Netherlands frontier and from the Rhine, and have caused an immense expense and an alarming confusion. But, although the English cabinet and the States-General had adopted the plan, and although troops were collected for embarkation in England, in Ireland, and in Holland, it came to nothing. The duke wrote pressing letters to Lord Godolphin, and went and came, in the midst of his sieges and other absorbing business, between the Hague and his camp, urging that if the double blow were struck—if the descent on the French coast were promptly effected, and he left at liberty to go into Italy in force—Louis XIV. must be brought to reasonable conditions before the close of this year. All was in vain.

But, without the presence and companionship of Marlborough, Prince Eugene gathered a splendid crop of laurels.

In consequence of the great battle of Ramillies, the French king recalled the Duke de Vendôme from Italy, to take that command in the Netherlands which Villeroi had managed so fatally; and the aged monarch, who began to think that old men were not favourites with fortune, endeavoured to derive some consolation from the hope that Vendôme would put a new spirit into the army on the Dyle, and that his reverses and losses in Flanders might be balanced by the capture of Turin, the Duke of Savoy's capital. The French army of Italy had not been weakened: the Duke de la Feuillade was before Turin, with 100 battalions, 46 squadrons, 140 pieces of cannon, and 21,000 bombs; while Prince Eugene, the sole buckler and defence of the falling state, was beyond the Adige, and, to all appearance, kept in check by a long chain of entrenchments, which the French had made round Turin. But, in spite of the Duke of Orleans (afterwards the *Regent*, infamous by that name), who had succeeded Vendôme in the supreme command of the army of Italy, Eugene, by an admirable intermixture of military science, courage, and perseverance, came up to Turin, attacked the French in their lines of circumvallation, defeated them, with the loss of their artillery, baggage, and 9,000 slain, or prisoners, and drove Orleans and de la Feuillade out of Italy, to the borders of Dauphiné. This battle, chiefly fought between the Doria and the Stura, was the more brilliant, as, besides their entrenchments, the French had the superiority in numbers, in artillery, in the fresh and unfatigued condition of their troops—in everything except in the genius of the commander.*

Whenever Marlborough obtained a victory, or any signal success, Eugene hastened to congratulate; and whenever the like success attended the valiant and brilliant efforts

* For a brief and spirited account of this remarkable Italian campaign of Prince Eugene, see a note by General Sir George Murray, in the third volume of the Marlborough Despatches.

of Eugene, Marlborough was among the first, and always the warmest, in bestowing sympathy and commendation. On the present occasion, the duke was transported with joy at Eugene's triumph, and enthusiastically expressed his feeling to all he met, and to all to whom he addressed letters. He wrote to the duchess :—"It is impossible to express the joy it has given me ; for I do not only esteem, but I really love that prince. This glorious action must bring France so low, that, if our friends can be persuaded to carry on the war one year longer with vigour, we could not fail, with the blessing of God, to have such a peace as would give us quiet in our days ; but the Dutch are at this time unaccountable."

In fact, the Dutch were again listening to the insidious propositions of adroit French negotiators, and, for a long time, Marlborough was kept in constant fear of their concluding a separate and a very selfish peace. The Court of Versailles bid high, but the States-General wanted far more than it would bid. For French Flanders, and possession of all the Netherlands, with Luxemburg and a congeries of fortresses, the Dutch would have made peace, and have deserted the allies,—to remain neutral, or to join their arms with those of France, as circumstances and their own interests might suggest. Upon far more moderate conditions, the French faction would have broken up the grand confederacy ; but, happily, that faction was in a minority at the Hague, at Amsterdam, and almost everywhere else.

In addition to these political anxieties, numerous other cares, of the same sort, occupied the mind of our great commander. He was the negotiator-general for the whole of Europe ; in diplomacy, he either suggested and directed, or did everything himself ; he was, in fact, Minister for Foreign Affairs, as well as Commander-in-Chief ; for years, his camp, wherever it was, might have been called our Foreign Office. Our secretary of state for that depart-

ment was, indeed, a *secretary*, and very little more. The labour imposed upon Marlborough was excessive. He had to attend vigilantly to all that was passing in the numerous independent states of Germany, whose interests or prejudices were continually clashing; he had to keep his eye on the court of Savoy, and to watch every turn of the war in Italy, and every political combination, from the foot of the Alps, and the city of Turin, to Naples and Palermo; and, when the war in Spain—after a brilliant beginning, on the part of the allies—was made to go all wrong through the eccentricities of Lord Peterborough, and the too great slowness and caution of the Archduke Charles and his Austrian advisers, he was obliged to devote a laborious attention to that peninsula. His correspondence was endless. Like the Duke of Wellington, he worked as much with the sword as with the pen.

His calm patience, his imperturbable good nature, his vast political capacity, and his diplomatic address were of inestimable value, and achieved benefits as great as ever he obtained on the field of battle. Nobody can attentively study the history of the War of the Succession without being inwardly convinced that but for Marlborough, the great confederacy against the perilous ambition of the French monarch would have been shivered and dissolved in 1706, or in the following year. Some notion may be formed of the extent of his labours in the cabinet (frequently only his tent) from his letters which have been published.* But hundreds of letters, addressed to foreign generals and statesmen, in all parts of Europe, have never seen the light.

Labour as he would, a full success was not at all times to be looked for in diplomacy any more than in war. His best advice, after being thankfully received, was often de-

* See the innumerable letters in Archdeacon Coxe's *Memoirs*, and the *Letters and Despatches of the Duke*, edited by the late General Sir George Murray.

parted from in action, and his wisest combinations were often deranged by treachery or imbecility; but he always consoled himself with the reflection that he, at least, had done his best. In this campaign we find him writing to the States deputies in the camp before Ostend:—*Il est fâcheux quand les affaires ne vont pas comme on le souhaiterait, mais c'est toujours quelque consolation de voir qu'on fait tout ce qu'on peut.** [It is vexatious when affairs do not go as one could wish; but it is always some consolation to see that one does all that one can.] These words, or analogous expressions, very frequently occur in his letters and despatches; for the allies, by their conduct, very frequently gave him need of such consolation.

Sufficient prominence has not been given to the difficulties under which Marlborough laboured with respect to his artillery, his ammunition, and other military stores. Either our arsenals must have been badly stocked, or our home government must have been very sparing of supplies. For gunpowder, for bullets and balls, for the very guns themselves, the duke was left to depend on the slow States-General; and we frequently find his movements checked and his sieges delayed by want of Dutch powder.† On these topics alone his correspondence was voluminous. Had proper supplies been at hand, the campaign of 1706, so noticeable for its sieges, would not have closed without the capture of one or two of the frontier fortresses of France.

Much of the general's time must also have been occupied by matters of finance; for he negotiated loans, paid subsidies, and attended to the distribution of the money furnished by England and the States-General; and these are matters

* Marlborough Letters and Despatches, edited by Sir George Murray.

† See numerous papers and despatches, as given by Archdeacon Coxo and General Sir George Murray. "The preparations are not ready;" "I cannot move without ammunition;" "the siege lingers because we have no gunpowder to send to the trenches:"—these, and the like expressions, are of frequent occurrence.

never to be managed without a severe trial of temper. Every one of the subsidised princes craved for more money than he got, and complained that every other prince in the same category obtained more than he deserved. Hessians and Hanoverians in a camp could never agree. This had become a proverbial saying. But other nations serving under Marlborough were as hostile to each other as Hanoverians and Hessians; dissensions were constantly breaking out among them, and all these he had to conciliate or to soothe with the oil of his gentleness. One immense advantage the French had over him was this—the mass of their armies was always of one and their own nation, and thoroughly French.

During this year's campaign—shortly after the siege of Menin—Marlborough's most intelligent officer, and most confidential friend, the gallant Cadogan, who had particularly distinguished himself, as well at Ramilies as at Blenheim, was surprised while protecting a foraging party, and made prisoner by the enemy. For a time it was reported in camp that he was killed. The duke's emotion on this occasion brings to mind that which was felt, on the retreat from Burgos, by the illustrious Wellington, when his friend Sir Arthur Paget was taken. Marlborough wrote to the duchess:—"An officer is just come to me to give me an account of the forage we have made this day, and tells me that poor Cadogan is taken prisoner or killed, which gives me a great deal of uneasiness, for he loved me, and I could rely on him. I am now sending a trumpet to the governor of Tournay, to know if he be alive; for the horse that beat him came from that garrison. I have ordered the trumpet to return this night, *for I shall not be quiet till I know his fate.*"* He had soon the satisfaction to find his apprehensions unfounded. Cadogan was sent back on his parole two days afterwards, and this act of courtesy, on the part of the French commander, was immediately repaid by the liberation

* Letter in Archdeacon Coxe.

of the Baron de Pallavicini, who had been made prisoner at Ramilies.

Having despatched an infinitude of political business, and placed his army comfortably in winter quarters, Marlborough came over to England, and landed at Margate on the 16th of November. He found great jealousies and distractions in the cabinet of Queen Anne. By his presence, and by the wonderful influence and prevalency of his wife, the obnoxious elements of the government were removed; but not without an evident loss of royal favour on the part of the duchess, upon whom, from first to last, Marlborough so materially depended. From this moment an opening began to be made for the intriguing, unscrupulous, ambitious spirit of St. John (Bolingbroke), and the deep state-craft of Harley (Oxford). There were not wanting ignorant critics in war, who disparaged the battle of Ramilies and its consequences (the reduction of Belgium), and who pretended that the duke ought to have swallowed up Vendôme and his army, and have taken Paris. Even in Parliament there were men ready to prove that the Earl of Peterborough who, to use an expression which Talleyrand applied to Lafayette, *avait bien sauté pour reculer*, was a far greater general than the Duke of Marlborough.

But in both Houses of Parliament, as well as in the great body of the nation, the majority held very different opinions. He was received with a hearty burst of popularity. The people lined the streets to look at him and cheer him. He was conducted in one of the queen's carriages, amidst a splendid procession of the nobility, to Temple Bar, where he was received by the city authorities, who magnificently feasted him in Vintner's Hall.* Thanks were voted to him by both houses, and when he took his seat among the peers, the lord-keeper of the seals thus addressed him:—

* At the request of the city, the standards and colours taken at Ramilies were transferred from Whitehall, where they had been first deposited, to Guildhall.

“MY LORD DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH,—I am commanded by this house, to give your grace their acknowledgment and thanks for the eminent services you have done since the last session of Parliament, to her Majesty and your country, together with their confederates in this just and necessary war. Though some former successes against the power of France, while it remained unbroken, gave most reasonable expectation that you would not fail to improve them; yet, what your grace has performed this last campaign, has far exceeded all hopes, even of such as were most affectionate and partial to their country's interest and your glory. The advantages you have gained against the enemy are of such a nature, so conspicuous in themselves, so undoubtedly owing to your courage and conduct, so sensibly and universally beneficial in their consequences to the whole confederacy, that to attempt to adorn them with the colouring of words, would be vain and inexcusable; and, therefore, I decline it, the rather because I should certainly offend that great modesty which alone can, and does add lustre to your actions, and which, in your grace's example, has successfully withstood as great trials as that virtue has met with in any instance whatsoever. And I beg leave to say, that if anything could move your grace to reflect with much satisfaction on your own merit, it would be this, that so august an assembly does, with one voice, praise and thank you: an honour, which a judgment so sure as that of your grace's, to think rightly of everything, cannot but prefer to the ostentation of a public triumph.”

The reply of the duke was short and modest:—“I esteem this a very particular honour, which your lordships are pleased to do me. Nobody in the world can be more sensible of it than I am, nor more desirous to deserve the countenance of your favour and good opinion.”

Having lost his only son, and being without hopes of

further issue, the duke was naturally anxious that the rewards which had been granted for his meritorious services, should be extended to his daughters and their posterity. This extension was made in a manner no less gratifying than honourable. On the 17th December, the House of Lords presented an address to the Queen, requesting her Majesty to perpetuate the memory of the great actions of the Duke of Marlborough, by continuing his titles and honours in his posterity by Act of Parliament, and soliciting that the Queen would please, in virtue of her prerogative, to indicate in what manner they should be so limited.

The queen, in reply, having expressed her resolution to extend the titles and honours of the duke to his daughters and their heirs male, in succession, so as to comprise all his posterity, recommended that the honour and manor of Woodstock, with the house of Blenheim, should always descend with the title. In the course of the deliberation, the Duke of Marlborough addressed the house, in terms indicative of his gratitude and satisfaction.

“MY LORDS,—I cannot find words sufficient to express the sense I have of the great and distinguished honour which the House has been pleased to do me, in their resolution and their application to her Majesty. The thoughts of it will be a continual satisfaction to me, and the highest encouragement; and the thankful memory of it must last as long as any posterity of mine.

“I beg leave to say a word to the House in relation to that part of her Majesty’s most gracious answer, which concerns the estate of Woodstock and the house of Blenheim. I did make my humble request to the queen, that those might go along with the titles, and I make the like request to your lordships, that, after the Duchess of Marlborough’s death, *upon whom they are settled in jointure*, that estate and house may be limited to go always along with the honour.”

This request was speedily gratified. The requisite bills being prepared and approved by the peers, were transmitted to the Commons on the 19th. On the ensuing day they were twice read, for the sake of form, and being passed unanimously, received the royal sanction without delay. The settlement consisted of two acts: the first rendered the honours and dignities of John, Duke of Marlborough, permanent in his posterity, and annexed the manor of Woodstock, with the house of Blenheim, to the ducal title, after the death of the duchess; the second was to entail in perpetuity the annual sum of 5,000*l.* from the post-office, first upon the duchess, and afterwards on his eldest daughter, Lady Harriette Godolphin, and her heirs male; and in failure of such issue, successively to the three other daughters and their heirs male: namely, Anne, Countess of Sunderland; Elizabeth, Countess of Bridgwater; and Mary, Marchioness of Mounthermer.

Before he could proceed to open the campaign of the year 1707, Marlborough was compelled to go into Germany, and there undertake negotiations as important, and quite as difficult, as any in which he had been hitherto engaged.

Charles XII. of Sweden, whose valour and genius were nearly allied to madness, had shaken the whole of the north of Europe with his astonishing victories, and was now, from his camp in Saxony, threatening more than one member of the grand confederacy. As a mere boy, he had, by one brilliant campaign, reduced the King of Denmark to sign a dishonouring peace: he had burst into the Russian territories on the shores of the Baltic, and won the battle of Narva, and gained a series of victories, which do, indeed, assume the character of romance; next, he had conquered Poland, dethroning one king and setting up another of his own choice; and then he had led his apparently invincible army into Saxony, overrunning the whole of that fair country, and leaving its elector, who had also been king of Poland, in a most helpless and humiliated condition. Louis XIV.

felt, that if the sword of the Swede were only cast in his scale, France might yet triumph to the full extent of his illimitable desires; and no time was lost in despatching clever French diplomatists to the camp of Charles.

As early as the 14th of February, in a letter dated from the palace of St. James, Marlborough announced to Count Wratislaw, the imperial minister, his uneasiness on this subject. "My letters from Holland," said he, "continue to be full of misgivings as to the designs of the King of Sweden; I have therefore proposed to make a tour in Saxony before going to the army, in order to assure that prince of the friendship of my queen, and that her Majesty will at all times find a pleasure in being able to give him proofs of it. If my journey is approved of, I hope it will have a good effect. As for myself, I have no other view in it than to contribute to the public good, and to restore quiet to agitated minds."* Men's minds were indeed agitated at the apparition of "this military meteor." As the successor of Gustavus Adolphus, Charles was the hereditary enemy of the house of Austria, and he had already fixed a quarrel upon the emperor, and assailed him with extravagant and insolent demands.

At the same time, the King of Prussia and the princes on the Rhine were greatly alarmed as to the designs of the Swede, which were kept a great mystery. By means of Grumbkow, the Prussian general and politician, who had been despatched by his royal master on a mission to the Swedish head-quarters, Marlborough ascertained that the object which Charles had most at heart was to penetrate into the interior of the vast Muscovite empire, and to give the *coup-de-grace* to his hated rival the Czar Peter. But there was no possibility of judging how long Charles might postpone this favourite object, or what other schemes he might not be brought into by French diplomacy, and the

* General Sir George Murray. Letters and Despatches of the Duke vol. iii.

large sums of French money which had been offered to his needy and venal advisers. The duke, also, was importuned by his friends in England, Holland, and Germany, and above all by the court of Vienna, to visit the Swedish monarch in person. The duke's resolution was finally decided by the declaration of Charles XII., *that he would treat with no other person except that great soldier, Marlborough.* The English cabinet now fully approved of the journey, and the duke made his preparations for it in the greatest secrecy. He left the Hague on the 20th of April, and reached the Swedish camp at Alt-Ranstadt, on the evening of the 26th. His grace immediately drove to the lodging of Count Piper, the favourite of Charles, and at once captivated that rude, boisterous, and pragmatical Swede, "who had all the manners of a pedant, without his learning."*

They conversed together for more than an hour, and during that hour the duke made many valuable discoveries as to the intentions and disposition of the fiery young king. Early on the following morning, Count Piper conveyed the duke in his carriage to the royal head-quarters, and immediately introduced him to Charles. The duke spoke French fluently, and the king understood that language perfectly; but as the royal Swede hated to speak French, the duke was attended by Mr. Robinson, our minister at the imperial court, who could speak German, and who acted as interpreter. The head of Charles was previously filled with Marlborough's victories, and it was evident to all who were about his person that, at the very first interview, he was charmed with the duke's person, manners, and address. A common routine diplomatist, a stiff *unwarlike* formalist, whatever might have been his instructions, would have done far more harm than good with the impetuous royal soldier. Presenting his letters of credence from the

* Letter from Count Grumbkow to Marlborough, in Archdeacon Coxe.

Queen and her husband the Prince of Denmark, the duke made a short compliment in English, which was translated by Mr. Robinson :—

“I present to your Majesty,” said he, “a letter, not from the chancery, but from the heart of the queen, my mistress, and written with her own hand. Had not her sex prevented it, she would have crossed the sea to see a prince admired by the whole universe. I am in this particular more happy than the queen, and I wish I could serve some campaigns under so great a general as your Majesty, that I might learn what I yet want to know in the art of war.”*

The vain-glorious Charles, whose passion for military glory amounted to a mania, was delighted at receiving such compliments from so illustrious a commander : his countenance became radiant ; his reply was unusually gracious. Through Count Piper he said :—“The Queen of Great Britain’s letter and your person are both very acceptable to me, and I shall always have the utmost regard for the interposition of her Britannic Majesty, and the interests of the Grand Alliance. It is, likewise, much against my will if I have been obliged to give the least umbrage to any of the parties engaged in it. But your excellency cannot fail to be convinced that I had just cause to come into this country with my troops. On the other hand, you may assure the queen, my sister, that my design is to depart from hence, as soon as I have obtained the satisfaction I demand ; but not sooner. However, I shall do nothing that can tend to the prejudice of the common cause in general, or the Protestant religion in particular, of which I shall always glory to be a zealous protector.”

The duke dined with the king, sitting on his Majesty’s right hand. The conversation at table was all of wars and battles ; and Charles, who was accustomed to despatch his frugal meal in twelve or fifteen minutes, sat that day more

* Archdeacon Coxe’s Memoirs.

than three quarters of an hour at table. The dinner over, they retired into the king's closet, and there held a long conference on political matters.*

With consummate address Marlborough gained all his important points with Charles, without committing himself or his queen or government to any measures or pledges which might prove embarrassing or even dangerous hereafter. The royal Swede fully agreed with him as to the dangers to be apprehended from the usurpations and preponderance of France. He even argued that France, although humbled, was not yet sufficiently humbled to listen to reasonable terms, and that there could be no lasting safety to Europe till she was driven back from the Rhine and the Alps, and reduced, as to her frontiers, to the same condition as that in which she was left by the peace of Westphalia, in 1648.†

From the Swedish camp Marlborough travelled to Leipzig to pay a visit to the unfortunate Augustus, who was dethroned as King of Poland, and almost ruined as Elector of Saxony. Without offending Charles, who had caused all these disasters, the duke advised and consoled Augustus, gave to his minister a bill for 40,000 crowns, in order that he might hasten the march of the Swedes out of Saxony; and he relieved him of part of the heavy expenses of his now useless army, by pressing the court of Vienna to take three or four thousand Saxon horse into their pay.

* For the duke's own account of this interview, see a curious letter written by his grace from Alt Ranstadt, on the 27th of April, to Mr. Secretary Harley, in General Sir George Murray's Letters and Despatches.

† In leaving Alsace to the French, the treaty of Westphalia left them far too much. In this direction the French frontier never ought to have been allowed to be pushed beyond the Vosges mountains. Ever since their occupation of the country, the French have made Alsace a broad basis of military operations against Germany. The population of the country, it will be remembered, was, and long continued to be, thoroughly Germanic, and not Gallic.

From Leipzig the duke returned to the Swedish camp, and held long conferences with Count Piper, Hermelin, Ciederholm, Field-Marshal Renschoeld, and other ministers and generals who had the most influence with their king. The Elector of Hanover (afterwards George I.) had pointed out to Marlborough how very unwise it would be to go among the hungry favourites of Charles with an empty purse, and had strongly recommended his grace to offer to Count Piper an annual pension of 2,000*l.*, and to Hermelin a pension of 1,000*l.*, taking care to *pay the first year in advance*. The duke acted on this advice, and offered the first year's payment. Hermelin pocketed the cash, apparently *sans phrases*. Count Piper had delicacies and scruples. Marlborough knew what these meant, and with ladies the duke was irresistible; so he went to Piper's wife, and the Swedish countess thankfully took the English money. A pension of 1,000*l.* a year was also bestowed on Ciederholm. The money was well spent. The Swedes agreed to withdraw out of Saxony, broke off all intercourse with the agents of Louis XIV., and ceased to threaten and alarm our allies; and soon afterwards Charles involved himself in those Russian campaigns which ended in the ruin of his glorious army, and in his own wild captivity among the Turks.

In only eighteen days after his departure therefrom, Marlborough returned to the Hague, having visited the King of Prussia at Charlottenburg on his way back, and there disconcerted sundry petty intrigues of Lord Raby, Queen Anne's insincere and very unworthy representative at the court of Berlin.

Notwithstanding the violence of his temper and his numerous eccentricities, there were qualities in Charles XII. to be admired and to be remembered. He was every inch a soldier; as a hero he was comparable with Alexander the Great. Cool and unromantic as he was, by temperament and by long use of courts and camps and the world at large,

Marlborough seems to have felt all this, and to have very frequently thought of him whose fate it was to perish in his prime before a petty fortress, and to leave

. . . "a name, at which the world grew pale,—
To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

"This journey," said Marlborough, "has given me the advantage of seeing four kings, three of whom I had never seen. They seem to be all very different in their kinds. If I was obliged to make a choice, it should be the youngest, which is the King of Sweden."*

But to the camp, or rather to the camps of the confederates. The theatre of the war carried on by the grand alliance was not upon one stage: the drama was playing at one and the same time on the Rhine and the Low Countries, in Spain, and in Italy, and in each of these countries the campaign was influenced by the events, unfortunate or auspicious, which took place in all the other countries.

This year, 1707, the fighting began in Spain, and it was most disastrous to the allies. By a strange and selfish convention, the Emperor Joseph had allowed the undisturbed retreat of a considerable French army shut up in the Milanese; and these veteran troops the French king had sent to reinforce his grandson Philip in Spain. Subsequently the Duke of Savoy, by treaty, permitted all that remained of the French army, which Prince Eugene had so soundly beaten under the walls of Turin, to retire unmolested through the passes of the Alps, and some of these regiments were likewise put on the road to Spain. On our side little was done to strengthen Charles the Austrian King of Spain. At the same time Charles and his German generals and ministers continued to disagree with the English commanders, and the English with them and with their

* Letter to the duchess, in Coxe. The four kings were, Augustus, whom Charles had dethroned, Stanislaus, whom Charles had made King of Poland, the King of Prussia, and Charles himself.

other allies, the Portuguese. Lord Peterborough, who had gone in search of money—of which Charles was sorely in need—after visiting the mercantile city of Genoa and other Italian towns, and flying, like a postilion or courier, over more than half of Europe, with great profit to his own geographical knowledge, but without any great success as a loan-negotiator, had returned to Spain, the scene of his short, but most brilliant, military glory, to serve as a volunteer. But, as he could no longer command, he took a malicious pleasure in thwarting those who did; in turning General Lord Galway into ridicule; in uttering witticisms at the expense of the Austrian claimant to the Spanish throne; and in saying, on all occasions, that men were great fools to fight and throw away their lives for two such noodles as Charles and Philip. Peterborough, at the very least, ought to have been put under arrest and sent out of the country; but there he was left to do all the mischief that he could; and, as his fighting qualities had endeared him to the soldiery, this mischief was very considerable.

On the other side, the French claimant was faithfully and most ably served by a native *Englishman*, the young and brave Duke of Berwick. Many things were strange in our Revolution of 1688, and in the War of the Succession, and this was among the strangest. Berwick, who proved himself one of the greatest generals of the period, was the Duke of Marlborough's own nephew, being the illegitimate son of Arabella Churchill, Marlborough's eldest sister, by the Duke of York, afterwards James II.* Berwick had followed his father the dethroned king to the continent, had entered the French service, had greatly distinguished himself, and had obtained rapid promotion. Among the officers of the allies in Spain there was assuredly not

* Arabella Churchill, when very young and fascinating, was placed at court as Maid of Honour to the Duchess of York, the first wife of James II. At that profligate period, such a place, for such a person, was the surest road to dishonour.

one competent to contend with him; for, although Peterborough had equal fire, and perhaps equal genius, he had none of Berwick's coolness and circumspection. It had been resolved, in the preceding winter, that the allies should unite all their forces, and march again to Madrid by the way of Arragon; but Charles was deterred by the intelligence of the great reinforcements that had joined or were to join Philip; and he marched away with some detachments into Catalonia, in order to defend that province, which seemed really and steadily attached to his cause, against an attack which the French threatened from the side of Roussillon. He proposed that Lord Galway, with the English and Dutch troops, and the Marquis Das Minas with the Portuguese, should dispose their forces so as to cover the frontiers of Arragon and Valencia, remaining on the defensive till supplies should arrive from England, or from Italy, where the war was at an end. But Galway and Das Minas would not follow this plan, perhaps they could not with safety to themselves adopt it; they were badly supplied in all respects; and they were tempted, by the easy prey of some of the enemy's magazines, to march to the frontiers of Castile. Then they turned and laid siege to the town of Villena, in Valencia. Before they made a breach they were warned of the approach, by forced marches, of the Duke of Berwick, who still commanded for Philip, who, like his competitor Charles, had no taste for pitched battles. Galway and Das Minas raised the siege of Villena, and boldly advanced to meet Berwick. They met on the plain of Almanza, on Easter Monday, the 24th of April (N. S.), and one of the hardest-fought battles of this war was the consequence. The English, Dutch, and Portuguese, commanded by Galway and Das Minas, were far inferior in number to the French and Spaniards; they were deficient in cavalry, and what they had was not good; but the English and Dutch infantry kept the battle undecided

for six sanguinary hours. According to Berwick's own account, his horse were repeatedly repulsed by those steady columns of foot; charge after charge was ineffectual; and even when the French and Spaniards seemed victorious on both wings, their centre was cut through and broken, and the main body of their infantry completely beaten. But, in the end, victory remained with Berwick: Galway and Das Minas were both wounded; 5,000 of their men were killed; and, in the course of that and the following day, nearly all the rest of their little army, to escape starvation, surrendered. The victory of Almanza was indeed complete. Without any force to oppose him, and with fresh reinforcements brought up by the Duke of Orleans, Berwick entered Valencia and took a number of towns, while the Duke of Orleans went to lay siege to Saragossa, which city, after a strange exhibition of superstition, surrendered to his royal highness without firing a shot.* From Valencia Berwick advanced towards the Ebro, suffering greatly, like the enemy he had recently defeated, from want of provisions. Indeed, such was the

* "I must not omit a singular circumstance: Count de la Puebla (who commanded in Saragossa for Charles), to endeavour to keep the people in order as long as he could, and by that means to retard the Duke of Orleans' march, made the inhabitants of Saragossa believe that the reports which were raised concerning a new army coming from Navarre were false; and even that the camp which appeared was not a real one,—that it was nothing more than a phantom, formed by magic art: upon which the clergy went in procession upon the ramparts, and from thence, after a number of prayers, exorcised the pretended spectres that were in sight. It is surprising that the people were credulous enough to give into such an imagination, but they were not undeceived till the next day, when the Hussars of the Duke of Orleans' army, after having briskly pursued a guard of cavalry of Count de la Puebla's as far as the gates of the city, cut off several of their heads. They were then seized with fear, and the magistrates sent out as quick as possible to submit to his royal highness. I could never have believed this story, if I had not been assured of the truth of it at Saragossa by all the principal persons of the city."—*Memoirs of the Duke of Berwick.*

wretched state of Spain that there were few districts of the kingdom where an army of either party could subsist for any length of time; and owing to the badness of the roads it was difficult and most tedious to collect provisions, and bring them from other provinces. It was the 4th of June before Berwick crossed the Ebro, at Caspe. Clouds of Spanish partisans, and the wrecks of some English and Portuguese regiments, had kept flying before him; and some of them now threw themselves into Lerida, a strong fortress, before which the great Condé himself had been foiled. Berwick resolved to besiege Lerida; but he was badly supplied with artillery and ammunition, and had scarcely bread for his men to eat. From the middle of June to the middle of August he was unable to undertake anything; and on the 18th of August, a cabinet courier from Paris brought him orders to repair in person, with all possible speed, into Provence, to assist, with his good generalship, the Duke of Burgundy, who was marching to the relief of Toulon, besieged by the Duke of Savoy, who had carried the war into the *grand monarque's* own country.

The siege of Toulon has been mentioned, but it was of such importance as to call for further notice. The project had been concerted between the courts of St. James's and Turin, between Marlborough and Prince Eugene; and when the latter general, with the Duke of Savoy and an army of 30,000 men, crossed the Alps by the Col de Tende, Sir Cloudesly Shovel, with a combined fleet of English and Dutch, was off the coast of Provence to co-operate. On the 10th of July, Eugene reached the Var. Sir John Norris, a gallant seaman, ascended that river with boats and gun-boats, and landed his sailors, who carried some French entrenchments sword in hand, and cleared the passage for the army of Savoy, which crossed on the 11th. Then the Duke of Savoy made a halt, which, with the slow marching afterwards, allowed time for the arrival of strong detachments from the army of Villars on the Rhine. The French, in

fact, were drawing in troops from all parts; and they not only repaired the fortifications of Toulon, but covered that important place by a fortified camp, in which they had forty battalions.

Prince Eugene, it is said, upon observing the disposition of the enemy, and finding he must fight an army entrenched on the outworks, and on the rough and steep heights that surrounded Toulon, and that were furnished with a vast number of guns, proposed retreating forthwith; but the Duke of Savoy was positive in his opinion that an attempt ought to be made. Accordingly a gallant and a very successful attack was made upon an outwork on the hill of St. Catherine, and upon two small forts near the beautiful harbour. But the loss, including the brave Prince of Saxe Gotha, was considerable, and Toulon not only remained as strong as ever, but was even made stronger by the arrival of more and more detachments; and on the 15th of August, the French recovered the position of St. Catherine, and attacked the Savoyards in their camp. It was now universally agreed among the allies to give up the siege; but, in retaliation for the ruin of his capital city of Turin, the Duke of Savoy gave directions for bombarding Toulon, both by sea and land; and he and Prince Eugene viewed from one of the heights "the dreadful blaze, which was some consolation to them under this disappointment." The bombardment from the side of the sea was indeed terrible: a great part of the city was ruined by it; the arsenal greatly injured; and the English and Dutch sailors destroyed two batteries, and eight ships of the line which were lying in the harbour. This being done, the confederates, on the 25th of August, retired in the night, in much greater haste than they had advanced. On the 31st, the army of Savoy repassed the Var, whence they continued their retreat to the maritime Alps. As the detachments from the army of Villars, from the Rhine, and other quarters, were wanted in their old positions, there was no pursuit; and when

Eugene got beyond the Alps, he was in a condition to attack Suza, an ancient town at the foot of the Alps, and one of the best defences to Turin on the side of France. The French garrison resisted for a fortnight, and then capitulated. If the Duke of Savoy had acted with more promptness and vigour, and if the emperor had sent to this invasion in the south of France all the disposable troops he had in the north of Italy, Toulon might have been taken, and the great commercial city of Marseilles as well; and indeed the whole of France, as far as the Rhone, might have been occupied in one short campaign. Everything would have gone far better than it did if the Duke of Savoy, instead of taking the field, had remained quietly at Turin, and had left Prince Eugene to act by himself. The prince was not master of the army during this invasion.*

Berwick's splendid victory at Almanza may be said to have decided the fate of Spain, and to have released Louis XIV. from the necessity of draining his resources by sending battalions and treasure-chests in that direction. "I cannot, my lord duke," wrote Lord Galway to Marlborough, "but look upon the affairs of Spain as lost by this bad disaster: our foot, which was our main strength, being gone, and the horse we have left chiefly Portuguese, which is not good at all. Most of our English horse that got off were of the two *new raised* regiments of dragoons, who did not do their duty. All the generals here are of opinion that we cannot long continue in this kingdom."† The French took all the strongholds, except Lerida and Tortosa, and the maritime fortresses of Denia and Alicante; the authority of King Charles was confined to the province of Catalonia, where his collective force did not exceed 10,000 regular troops. A

* For many interesting particulars about this invasion of Provence, see the Marlborough Letters and Despatches, with Sir George Murray's notes thereon.

† Letter of Lord Galway, as given by Archdeacon Coxe, from the original at Blenheim.

general despondency manifested itself among the members of the confederacy; but Marlborough remained full of heart and hope, giving in every direction the wisest of counsels, and recommending measures which, if they had been vigorously prosecuted, would have led to results which would have more than counterbalanced the successes of the French in Spain.

As a part of the combined plan of the year, Prince Eugene was to have nearly all the Duke of Savoy's army with him, as also a powerful corps of Imperialists. But when this great commander was ready to move, the Duke of Savoy kept back many of his troops, in order that he might employ them in aggrandizing himself on the side of Lombardy, and the Emperor Joseph sent off 12,000 of his best men to the utmost extremity of the Italian peninsula, in order to conquer the kingdom of Naples, which would have fallen to him without any conquest, if the confederates had succeeded in their other great operations. In vain the Imperial court was entreated by Eugene and his friend, Marlborough, to give up this distant enterprise, and to send their 12,000 men into Provence. The obstinate perseverance in the Neapolitan expedition evidently disgusted Eugene, who did not act in this year's campaign with his wonted alacrity and spirit. In fact, he must have felt that he was invading France with an inadequate force. These results in Provence, added to the catastrophe in Spain, rendered this year's war an inglorious one to the allies; for the effects of the two disasters almost paralyzed the Duke of Marlborough and his army in Brabant.

Relieved by his Italian convention from feeding the war in Italy, and reinforced by the troops which had been allowed to get safely home from Lombardy and Piedmont, the French king was enabled to give great strength to his army on the Rhine, under the command of Marshal Villars. That old thorn in the side of Marlborough, the Margrave of Baden, had gone to his account, and had

been succeeded on the Upper Rhine by the Margrave of Barcuth, a very indifferent general who relied upon lines and palisades. With a very superior force, Villars, on the 23rd of May, carried the celebrated lines of Stolhoffen with the greatest ease. Driven from the cover upon which he had counted as a position of the greatest safety, the margrave and his army fled through the Black Forest, and abandoned that unfortunate country, the Palatinate, to the tender mercies of the French. These events, by themselves, produced confusion and dismay. Only two days before the forcing of the lines at Stolhoffen, Marlborough established his head-quarters at Conderlecht, in Brabant, where he mustered 68,000 combatants. He longed impatiently for a battle. "Vendôme's troops," said he, "may surpass ours in number, but they cannot equal them in goodness." If he could only fight, he felt sure of a victory; but the French were so advantageously placed, that he could not prudently move to attack them. Vendôme, with whom the Elector of Bavaria was still serving, mustered 78,000 men, or 10,000 more than Marlborough. Encouraged by this numerical superiority, and by the cheering intelligence which kept pouring in from other quarters, Vendôme seemed inclined to give the duke the opportunity for which he was praying. On the 25th of May, the duke, who had removed his camp to Lembeeq, wrote cheerfully to England, "The enemy are come out of their lines, so that the next march we make we shall be able to guess whether they design to meet us as they give out. It is certain they are very numerous; but our troops are all in so good a condition, that I think we can wish for nothing more than a battle to do our part towards repairing the misfortune in Spain."*

Vendôme and the Elector of Bavaria established themselves in a long line, stretching from the castle of Ligny on

* Letter to the Earl of Manchester, in General Sir George Murray's Letters and Despatches of the Duke.

the right, to Sombreuf on the left. Marlborough now took up his head-quarters at Soignies, and his army spread itself over the whole plain of WATERLOO. It appeared to be in the destiny of the great precursor of the Duke of Wellington, that he should and must gain a great victory on this memorable battle-field. Yet was it not so. The Dutch, who were again exceeding luke-warm in the war, had given to their field deputies all their former prepotency, and these civilians insisted, in a council of war, that Vendôme was too strong, and that Marlborough ought not to fight, but to retire, in order to cover Louvain and the city of Brussels. As there was no possibility of fighting without the consent of these men, and as it was more than ever necessary to humour the Dutch (to prevent their secretly negotiating with the French cabinet), the duke, annoyed and disgusted, retired leisurely to his former position, Vendôme taking especial care not to risk anything by following him. The French commander now carefully fortified his camp, and brought up more troops by reducing some of the garrisons in his rear; but still he stood in awe of his formidable adversary, and the summer wore away in a series of manœuvres, marches, and counter-marches. "In the army," said Marlborough, "there is all the desire imaginable to venture their lives for the public good; but all other people on this side of the water are so very wise, that I am afraid they will bring us at last to a bad peace."*

On the 15th of August, writing from his camp at Soignies, the duke said—"We have been marching for five days together with a design to bring the enemy to battle: we were twice in hopes of it. One of the days was the anniversary of the battle of Blenheim, and if the enemy would have stood, with the blessing of God, we might have had the like good success; but they continually retired before us, and yesterday got to the camp of Cambron. But

* Sir George Murray's Letters and Despatches.

this march has cost them pretty dear, since they have lost 2,000 men by desertion, hunger, and fatigue."*

The Dutch and the Imperialists were very incompatible allies, for the hereditary hatred of the house of Austria was an intenser passion in the heart of the Dutch than their hatred of the French. Nothing could be more remote from their wishes, than to see the Austrian dynasty repossessed permanently of Brabant and Flanders, and thus become once more the nearest neighbour of Holland. They mourned over the disaster at Stolhoffen, as that might bring down Marshal Villars upon themselves; but they openly rejoiced at the catastrophe in Spain as at a mortal blow inflicted on the interests of Austria. In the true spirit of hucksters and money-jobbers, they were selling military stores to the French while Marlborough was left badly provided, and they were lending, at a high percentage, great sums which Louis XIV. could not have obtained elsewhere.† And some among them there were who kept Vendôme fully informed of all that was passing on Marlborough's side of the lines, and of the firm resolution of the States-General to prevent any battle. This last assurance emboldened the French to make several military promenades, upon which they would not otherwise have ventured. And all this time the Dutch were at war with the French, the Dutch occupied a foremost line in the treaties of confederacy, the Dutch were our sworn allies, and not only could Marlborough not act without their consent and concurrence, but he was also imperatively bound not to give them the slightest offence. The great man preserved his wonderful temper, only now and then, among private friends, venting a sarcasm on the Dutch field-deputies.

* Letter to the Duke of Shrewsbury, in Sir George Murray's Letters and Despatches.

† See Sir George Murray's Letters and Despatches; and the Marlborough Correspondence, in Archdeacon Coxe.

The duke was once asked how it happened that Alexander the Great, and many other heroes of antiquity, had, in a very short time, made such considerable progress in their conquests, and that now all that the greatest generals could do, was to take two or three towns in the course of a whole campaign. "The reason," he replied, "is sufficiently obvious: Alexander, and the other great heroes of antiquity, had never any deputies from the States-General in their camps."

In the mean while, Marshal Villars was ravaging the Palatinate with fire and sword, sending out detachments in all directions to extort contributions, and conducting himself throughout with the utmost arrogance, rapacity, and severity. But the imperial army, which he had driven from Stolhoffen, when it had reached the river Jaxt, instead of continuing to fall back, made a movement by its right to Chreilsheim, and thence in the direction of Heilbron, which movement induced Marshal Villars to draw back. By this means both armies were brought again into the valley of the Rhine, in which they continued to make various movements until the close of the campaign, without any action of importance taking place. The French army went into winter quarters in November, in Alsace, the three bishoprics, and Franche Comté; and the Germans into the countries of the Black Forest, along the Neckar and the Mein, and in part on the left bank of the Rhine between Mayence and Landau.* Chiefly by the management of Marlborough, the command of the army on the Rhine was transferred from the incompetent

* Note by General Sir George Murray, in the Letters and Despatches of the Duke. It is much to be regretted that so accomplished a soldier, and such an excellent military critic as Sir George, could not find time to enrich the despatches with many more valuable notes than he has given; but at the period in which he was preparing his edition, Sir George was labouring under bad health, as well as under the burdens of parliamentary and official duty.

Margrave of Bareuth to the Elector of Hanover (afterwards George I.), who, if not a consummate general, was a firm, brave, fearless soldier.

While Marlborough was condemned to inaction, the eccentric Lord Peterborough, who really believed that he could rival or even eclipse his fame, was again galloping over Europe, and intriguing against him and the house of Austria in every devisable manner. This hair-brained lord even repaired to the camp of Charles XII., and endeavoured to induce that somewhat congenial spirit to break his engagements with the duke, and hurl his thunderbolts of war in Germany, instead of carrying them into the heart of Russia. "This lord," said a secret French agent, "who is bold, and has been treated as a madman, by those among the Swedish ministers who are suspected of being pensioners of England, has sought opportunities of speaking to the king, their master, and has found one. I hope he has not failed to profit by it. I do not know, however, whether his too great vivacity, and the ill offices of some Swedish ministers, may not have discredited his opinions."* But the worst offices that could be done to Lord Peterborough were done by himself. Without announcement, or notice given, he drove to the king's quarters with smoking horses, and, in his off-hand manner, demanded an audience. The Swedes would not suffer him to enter an apartment in which Charles had shut himself up with Count Piper. After remonstrating and storming, his lordship, who was as voluble as Marlborough was sparing of speech, fell into familiar gossip with the people in the ante-chamber. While thus engaged, he was told that the King of Sweden was going out. He ran to present himself; but Charles was already on horseback—was gone. Leaping on the horse of a Swedish servant which was ready saddled, his lordship spurred after the

* Intercepted letter of M. Besenval, the French agent at Leipzig, to Archdeacon Coxe.

king, and with hard work, both for himself and the groom's steed, he came up with him. But his Majesty kept galloping on, and at such a pace that Peterborough, hard rider as he was himself, was obliged to implore his Majesty to draw rein. Charles complied, and on the public highway the eccentric lord introduced himself to his Majesty, by giving his name and praising the good qualities of his Majesty's charger. The two rode together for a time, Lord Peterborough talking rapidly in French, and Charles laughing heartily. An interview like this could not be favourable to the views of the nobleman who had sought it, and who had forced his company upon the king in so undignified a manner. Besides, Charles had fresh in his memory the Duke of Marlborough. Peterborough sent in a writing, which he called a state-paper; but the manuscript had no more effect than his conversation; it probably only made the king laugh again. Peterborough, however, became formidable when he linked himself with St. John, Harley, and Marlborough's other secret enemies in England. The duke had begun by distrusting and disliking the man: he had declared that Peterborough was one of the most unprincipled of living men; but thinking him to be changed, and knowing him to be brave and clever, he afterwards had taken him into especial favour, and had warmly promoted his employment and advancement. Peterborough, all this time, was professing the most perfect devotion to the duke and duchess. But this hypocrisy and black ingratitude were common to St. John, Harley, and all that faction. Not a man was there among them but had owed his position to the duke; not one of them but professed the warmest gratitude until he could safely throw off the mask, and wound his great benefactor.

These men had ambition of the most aspiring kind. But there was another and far more numerous herd, whose instinct and motives were merely sordid, who clung to the

duke like leeches, until they had gorged themselves with gold, and then fell from him by their own gravity.

“Non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris hirudo.”

Prince Eugene's movements in Provence had this effect: the French court weakened Marlborough's immediate adversary by taking thirteen battalions from Vendôme's army, and sending them towards Toulon. As soon as Marlborough knew this, he broke up from his camp at Meldorp, crossed the Dyle, marched all night, and reached Genappe on the morning of August 11th. Vendôme instantly withdrew from his camp at Gemblours, and retreated to Seneff. Marlborough followed him closely; but could not bring him to action. Moving without beat of drum, and making forced marches by night and by day, the French got behind their fortified lines in front of Mons on the 15th; but sadly wearied and worn by the fatigues they had incessantly borne for sixty hours. Many had deserted on their march, and now 2,000 of their men, disgusted with the service, went over to the allies.

There followed fourteen days of heavy rain, by which Marlborough's always slowly moving ammunition was detained afar off. On the 1st of September, the weather having cleared up, the duke, again putting himself in motion, crossed the Dender, and established his quarters at Ath, on the high road to Mons. Once more Vendôme fell back, moving so rapidly, and acting with so much caution, that he could not be brought to battle, more especially as the Dutch had left nearly all Marlborough's artillery and stores still far in the rear. Thus, without a battle, and with only one or two skirmishes of light horse, ended the war of 1707 in these parts. To increase the mortification of the duke, he had never before had under him so fine an army, and one so full of the best spirit. Over and over again, in the course of his marches, or of his tedious encampments, he had spoken with pride of the

high qualities of his troops, saying that men and officers were ready for all work ; that it was impossible to see a finer army.*

As the duke and Prince Eugene congratulated each other in the hours of victory, so they condoled with one another in those of misfortune or disappointment. Eugene now wrote to the duke:—"What your highness has done, since you had the power of marching against the enemy, evidently proves that this campaign would have been as glorious as the last, if you had not been restrained by the great circumspection of the Dutch deputies, who, ignorant of our profession, follow the opinion of their generals, who know nothing but defensive warfare."†

The French historians, not contented with extolling Vendôme for having suffered no loss (which, says Southey, was no inconsiderable praise for a man who had been opposed to such an antagonist), represent Marlborough as having used every means to bring him to action, and as being constantly baffled by his consummate skill ! Had the Dutch guns and supplies been in Marlborough's camp, and the Dutch deputies far away from it, Vendôme's skill would not have saved him from defeat.

Having put his army in safe and comfortable winter-quarters, the duke, at the end of October, repaired to the Hague, to arrange a multiplicity of business, and labour hard to induce the allies to appoint Prince Eugene commander-in-chief of the army in Spain. None could deny that, next to himself, Eugene was the greatest general in Europe, and the personage in every way the most fit for the Spanish command, in which political and diplomatical ability were as requisite as military skill. But, although warmly supported by Queen Anne, who frequently importuned the emperor to send Eugene to the Peninsula, Marl-

* General Sir George Murray's Letters and Despatches. Coxé.

† Letter in Archdeacon Coxé.

borough failed in this attempt, and in the end Count Staremberg was fixed upon for that command.

The duke returned to London on the 16th of November, to meet a querulous parliament and a distracted cabinet. Lord Peterborough, who had visited the elector at Hanover after visiting Charles XII., and had sown fresh seeds of jealousy in the electoral court, had arrived in England before the duke, and had been secretly engaged in stirring up enemies against his benefactor. A new female favourite, Mrs. Masham, was supplanting the influence of the Duchess of Marlborough at court, and was in close league with Secretary Harley, who, by this time, was strongly suspected by the duke, and the premier Lord Godolphin, not only of plotting against them, but also of maintaining a dangerously treasonable correspondence with the Stuarts in France, and even with some of the French ministers. Matters had gone to such length, that, even before the duke's return from the continent, Lord Godolphin had remonstrated repeatedly with her Majesty, and had even threatened to resign. Marlborough also had declared, that he would not continue in command of the army if Godolphin ceased to be prime minister. "Nothing," he had said, "is worth rowing for against wind and tide. I am coming home without any opinion of my being able to do any good; but uncertainty is the worst of all conditions, and death itself is easier than the fear of it."*

The whole Tory party, in both houses of parliament, adopted Lord Peterborough as their idol, and heaped censures on Marlborough's inactive campaign. Peterborough himself, a ready and passionate speaker, spoke of the propriety of supporting the war in Spain rather than the war on the side of French Flanders; and out of doors he employed Dr. Friend, and other writing men, to draw up and publish enlogiums of his own conduct in the Peninsula as a soldier and statesman. These retainers were not

* Letter to the Duchess, in Archdeacon Coxe.

sparing of their praise: Dr. Friend compared the eccentric earl to Alexander the Great and Cesar, declaring that a new Quintus Curtius was wanting to describe his exploits. Lord Rochester, the hottest of all the Tories, supported Peterborough, and his party generally insisted on the policy of making Spain the chief scene of warfare, and prosecuting that war till the whole monarchy should be recovered for the Austrian King Charles. Peterborough himself exclaimed, "We should give the queen nineteen shillings in the pound, rather than make peace on any other terms. If necessary, I will return to Spain, and serve *even under* the Earl of Galway." Rochester, who was usually heated with wine, roared out, "We neglect the principal business to mind only accessaries. I cannot forget the saying of a great general, the old Duke of Schomberg, 'that to attack France in the Netherlands, is taking a bull by the horns.' I, therefore, propose, that we should remain on the defensive in that quarter, and send from our army 15,000 or 20,000 men into Catalonia." He was followed by the Earl of Nottingham, who bitterly complained that Spain, the principal object of the war, was almost abandoned.

Marlborough here rose, and spoke with great warmth. "The first reason," he said, "which induces me to object to this proposal is, that in Spain most of the enemy's strong places may be kept with one battalion in each; whereas, the strong fortresses in Brabant, which I have reduced, require twenty times that number for their preservation: secondly, if our army in the Netherlands be weakened, and the French gain any considerable advantage there, the discontented party in Holland, who are not a few, and who bear with impatience the great charges of the war, will not fail to cry aloud for peace."

Here the duke was tauntingly interrupted by Rochester, who wondered that his grace, who had ever been conspicuous for calmness and moderation, should now lose his

natural temper. His lordship insisted on the absolute necessity of succouring Spain, and requested his grace to oblige their lordships by letting them know how troops were to be obtained for that purpose. "The obligation," said he, "will be the greater, as Lord Peterborough has reported the opinion of Prince Eugene, that the German soldiers would rather be decimated than sent into Spain."

Marlborough, with becoming dignity, repelled this sarcasm, and also apologised for his warmth, by observing, that the subject was too important to be agitated without concern. He continued :—

"Although it is improper to disclose secret projects to so numerous an assembly, because the enemy will not fail to be informed of them, yet I am authorised by the queen to gratify your lordships, by the assurance that measures have been already concerted with the emperor, for forming an army of forty thousand men, under the command of the Duke of Savoy, and for sending succours to King Charles. It is also to be hoped that Prince Eugene may be induced to take the command in Spain, in which case the Germans will gladly follow him. The only difficulty which may be objected to this scheme is, the usual tardiness of the court of Vienna ; and it must be admitted that if the seven thousand recruits, which the emperor promised for Piedmont, had arrived in time, the enterprise against Toulon would probably have been attended with success. But I dare engage my word, that for the future his imperial majesty will punctually perform his promises."

This dignified reply was so explicit that even Rochester could start no plausible objection. "Had we known sooner, how well all things had been managed, this debate might have been spared."

The secondary question on the conduct and merits of Peterborough was now completely superseded, and Marlborough had scarcely ceased speaking before Lord Somers moved a resolution, in which he expressed the conviction that

all would agree ; namely, "That no peace could be reasonable or safe, either for her Majesty or for her allies, if Spain and the West Indies were suffered to continue in the power of the house of Bourbon."

No objection being expressed, Lord Wharton, after adverting to the communication made by the Duke of Marlborough, proposed an address of thanks to the queen, for her care, as well as for her instances with the emperor to send a considerable force to Spain, under the command of Prince Eugene. Lastly, Lord Halifax moved a resolution, pressing, "that her Majesty would be pleased to continue her solicitations with the emperor for this end, as well as for reinforcing the Duke of Savoy, and strengthening the army on the Rhine."*

This parliamentary storm blew over, but only to be succeeded by another, in which Marlborough, through his brother, Admiral Churchill, was deeply concerned. The admiral had been somewhat loud in his criticisms of the conduct of Lord Peterborough in Spain, and elsewhere; and in retaliation, all Peterborough's friends, and nearly the whole Whig party, assailed the admiral, holding him up as the cause of our naval failures, and accusing him not only of negligence and incompetence, but even of fraud and malice. Numerous reports and petitions from merchants, who complained that they had suffered great losses at sea through the mismanagement of the royal navy, were presented to parliament, and hot debates followed in both houses. Admiral Churchill contended, that though the petitioners had proved their losses, they had not substantiated their charges against the Admiralty; and he obtained the suspension of a vote of censure till the Admiralty could produce their proofs and justification, which were then in preparation. The Prince of Denmark, the queen's husband, was, nominally at least, lord high admiral, and at the head of the Admiralty board; and as the disgrace of

* Archdeacon Coxe.

Churchill must cast some obloquy on his royal highness, the court interest was put forward; and as there was no concert between the Whigs and Tories, this storm also came to nothing.

It is very difficult to define the two great political parties which, at this time, entirely divided the nation between them; and only a long and very attentive study of the history of the period will enable one to judge of the frequent changes of parties and principles which were so common in those days, or even to trace the course which Godolphin and Marlborough steered between them. The apparent simple facts are, that Godolphin, who had always been a Tory and a high churchman, now sought strength among the Whig party, conciliated the great Whig families at the expense of the Tories, and obtained a parliamentary majority at the cost of a heavy loss of royal favour; Queen Anne constantly disliking the Whigs, and abhorring the very principles to which she owed the throne. The Duke of Marlborough, always adverse to the spirit of faction, would still have tried to carry on the government by a combination of parties; but the thing was demonstrably impossible, and he was forced, if not into whiggery, into the necessity of leaning chiefly upon the Whigs for support.

Very suspicious circumstances against Mr. Secretary Harley being brought to light in a public court of justice and in Parliament, Godolphin and Marlborough were emboldened to demand from the queen the instant dismissal of that Tory minister, to whom Anne had privately given authority to form an entirely new cabinet, *if he could*. The duke's letter to her Majesty was to this effect:—

“MADAM,—Since all the faithful services I have endeavoured to do you, and the unwearied pains I have taken for these ten days to satisfy and convince your Majesty's own mind, have not been able to give you any such impressions of the false and treacherous proceedings of Mr. Secretary Harley to lord treasurer and myself;

but that your Majesty is pleased to countenance and to support him, to the ruin of your own business at home; I am very much afraid it will be attended with the sorrow and amazement of all Europe, as soon as the noise of it gets abroad. And I find myself obliged to have so much regard to my own honour and reputation, as not to be every day made a sacrifice to falsehood and treachery; but most humbly to acquaint your Majesty, that no consideration can make me serve any longer with that man. And I beseech your Majesty to look upon me, from this moment, as forced out of your service, as long as you think fit to continue him in it.

“No heart is fuller of duty to your Majesty than mine; nobody has more sincere wishes for your prosperity, nor shall more constantly pray for your Majesty’s long life, and for your happiness both here and hereafter. I am always, with the greatest respect, and the truest zeal for your service,” &c.*

By this time the influence of the duchess with the queen must have ceased entirely. Anne still persisted in her resolution, and encouraged Secretary Harley to maintain his post. On the 9th of February 1708, there was a meeting of the cabinet council, to which Godolphin and Marlborough were summoned as usual. The two friends waited on the queen, and told her in respectful but decided terms, that they would not sit again at the council table with Harley, and repeated their determination to resign. She appeared little concerned at the proposed retirement of the lord treasurer, but was much affected with the declaration of the general, and earnestly entreated him to change his purpose. The duke did not belie his repeated asseverations, that he would stand or fall with Godolphin: he firmly resisted her Majesty’s instances, and respectfully retired.

Repairing to the council-chamber, Anne took her seat, and Harley was about proceeding to open the business of

* Archdeacon Coxe.

the day. A murmur ran round the board. Harley stopped and turned pale. The Duke of Somerset rose and exclaimed, "I do not see how we can deliberate, when the commander-in-chief and the lord treasurer are absent." Harley was still more disconcerted; the queen remained silent. Somerset repeated his words, and then Anne rose from her seat, broke up the meeting, and withdrew with an expression of anger and alarm on her countenance.*

Two days after this dramatic scene, Harley was compelled to make a formal resignation of the seals of office. He was followed by St. John and by other Tory members of the government who had, in an underhand manner, thwarted the measures of the lord treasurer and the commander-in-chief.

But this victory had cost immense sacrifices—as well in royal favour as in Tory support—and the vanquished were left in possession of ambushes, from which they could carry on a guerilla warfare more fatal than any contest they could have maintained in the open field. Anne still clung to Harley: she prized him all the more for his defeat, and she consulted him more frequently, and was in reality more governed by him than ever she had been while he held the seals. Mrs. Masham, the new favourite, was Harley's own cousin, and by her means the back-stairs at court were always open to him and his friend St. John. They had all the secret opportunities they could desire, for practising upon the credulity, weaknesses, and prejudices of the queen.†

From the very hour of the victory, Marlborough's path became strewed with greater and still increasing difficulties: money was begrudged him for his campaigns, and for those

* Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough. Bishop Burnet. Archdeacon Cox.

† An Account of the Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough from her first coming to Court, &c. in a Letter from herself to my Lord ——. —London, 1742.

innumerable services—secret or open—without which no large army can be successfully kept in the field; the correspondence with the court at Versailles, and with the exiled family of St. Germain, though conducted with somewhat more caution, was rather accelerated than discontinued; whenever the thing was possible, the foreign policy and continental negotiations of Marlborough and Godolphin were set aside by the policy of the back-stairs; officers in the army were promoted without service or merit, and without the approval of the duke, and other officers; veterans in the service, and often covered with wounds, whom he recommended to royal favour, were left unpromoted and unnoticed. The great general was no longer entire master of his own army. He went to make war, while the queen he served was crying for peace. Yet, under all these discouraging or irritating circumstances, his campaign of the year 1708 was far more brilliant than any since the Blenheim campaign.

Marlborough took his departure on the 10th of April, to join and confer with Prince Eugene, who was anxiously expecting him at the Hague, having freed himself from the war in the south of Europe and obtained the emperor's permission to serve once more with the duke. He had a speedy passage to the Dutch coast, whence he proceeded to the Brill in an open boat, being quite as eager to meet Eugene as the prince was to rejoin him. The two heroes met at the Hague on the 13th of April, and proceeded to business without losing an hour. Where rank and authority were equal, there never was an instance of such perfect agreement—of such a total absence of all jealousy or bickering—as existed between Marlborough and Eugene; the marvellousness of this concord being the greater as the two great commanders were of different nations, different religions, and served not one, but several states. It was agreed between them that two great armies should be formed, the one in Brabant, the other on the Moselle; that the Elector of Hanover should

act on the defensive upon the Upper Rhine; and that Marlborough and Eugene should unite their forces and bring the enemy to the test in one great battle. All manner of obstacles were raised to this as to every other scheme: the Dutch, still harping upon peace, protested that they could not afford the quota demanded from them; George, the Elector of Hanover, demanded more money; and the emperor could do little or nothing without the levy-money for his contingent. "See," said Marlborough, "the great advantage the King of France has over the allies, since we depend upon the humours of several princes, and he upon nothing but his own will and pleasure . . . The slowness of these Germans is such, that we must be always disappointed." Serious disputes had also arisen, about territory in Italy, between the emperor and the Duke of Savoy; and, to add to all these causes of serious embarrassment, Marlborough's back was no sooner turned than fresh and desperate efforts were made in England to break up the Godolphin administration. The duke proposed returning immediately to London for a few days; but this he was unable to do at the moment. Not long after, his friends implored him to come over, as the only means of adjusting the clogged machinery of government—as the only measure which could save the cabinet from dissolution; but having within him the full assurance that, without his presence on the continent with the army, the war would all go wrong, he positively refused to quit his duties, and remained where he was. His own correspondence gives the most striking notion of the embarrassments he suffered on account of these home dissensions, which distracted his attention and overloaded him with work, when all his mind and all his energies were demanded by the diplomacy of the continent and the critical campaign:* for he knew by this time that Ven-

* See the Letters and Despatches, edited by General Sir George Murray, and the numerous letters published by Archdeacon Coxe. At times, there is a tone in this part of the duke's correspondence which

dôme, powerfully reinforced, had orders no longer to avoid, but to seek, a general engagement. So alarmed were the States-General at the idea of even a short absence of the duke, so fearful that he might be detained by contrary winds, or other accidents, that they had implored him, almost on their knees, not to leave them. Had Marlborough left in May, there would have been a defeat of the allies in June, and a shameful peace between the Dutch and the French in July or August.

Marlborough, however, was obliged to make another short visit to Hanover, to set matters right in that quarter, and to assist Prince Eugene in making up quarrels which had arisen in the courts of the Elector Palatine, the Landgrave of Hesse, the Elector of Saxony, and some German potentates of less note, one and all of whom were very reluctant to send their troops into the field.

On reaching Hanover, the two great generals found that George was eager to command a powerful army himself; that he could not bear the slightest hint of a diminution of his forces to increase the army of Marlborough or the army of Eugene; that he was very jealous of the plan in agitation, and fully resolved not to resume the command of the forces on the Rhine, which were merely to act on the defensive. By himself, Prince Eugene would have done nothing with the obstinate elector, for George entertained against him a strong feeling of aversion, considering that he had been sent to usurp the laurels which he had promised himself in this campaign. But for Marlborough the elector entertained the most friendly sentiments, and with this advantage in his favour, and by soothing George's pride and jealousy, and yielding to him in less important particulars, the duke obtained his consent for the formation of the separate army on the Moselle, which was to be commanded by Eugene.

rends the heart far more than any fictitious sorrows in poetry or the drama; but the pain is soon lost in admiration of the duke's patience and magnanimity.

But the elector *was not acquainted with the real project*, being left to suppose that Eugene might either act on the Moselle and invade France, or repair to the Rhine, as the turn of events might require.

George certainly did not know that Eugene was to join Marlborough as quickly as he could, nor was the strategical plan of the campaign communicated to him. Hence arose many subsequent heartburnings and difficulties. But had a contrary course been pursued with the elector, the secret would have been betrayed by some of his courtiers to the enemy, and the whole plan would have been spoiled.

At Hanover the two friends parted, Eugene proceeding to Dresden and Vienna, and Marlborough returning to the Hague—there to find reproachful letters from Godolphin and the duchess, who were again declaring that all would be lost if he did not return to London.

The duke went forthwith to Brussels, in the neighbourhood of which city the allied army was assembling.

Eugene, in the mean while, had made a temporary settlement of all the remaining disputes in Germany, had effected an accommodation between the courts of Vienna and Turin, and was hurrying on the preparations for the campaign. Yet at this moment Marlborough was again beset by the Dutch, who were trying to convince him of the necessity of a sudden peace; and in England Harley and St. John were singing to the same tune in the ears of the queen and Mrs. Masham.

Marlborough had not been a mortal man, if a few murmurs had not escaped him. Years were growing on him: he wished to be at rest. "For my part," said he, "I shall endeavour to do my duty *this* campaign, after which, I should be glad to see my place well filled, and that for the remaining part of my life I might have a little quiet, and be sometimes with my children." Except for brief intervals, snatched from public business during his short sojourns in England, these children he never saw for years; and no

one could possess stronger domestic affections than our great soldier and statesman.

While the Dutch were thus clamouring for peace, many of the people of Brabant and Flanders, who, the year before, had so rejoiced at Marlborough's victories, were clandestinely corresponding with the French, and proposing to put them in quiet possession of Antwerp and of other fortresses which the duke had taken.

Vendôme began by quitting his lines and acting on the offensive ; and Prince Eugene, now marching with the army of the Moselle towards Brabant, could not, make what haste he would, by any possibility join his forces to those of Marlborough for some time. The French mustered more than 100,000 combatants ; the duke could scarcely count 70,000 at this moment. Marlborough, however, had sufficient confidence in his troops not to wish to shun a battle ; and, once more, the field of Waterloo seemed destined to be the *champs clos* of a decisive combat.

Vendôme made a forward movement from Mons, to take advantage of the insurrection which he had concerted at Antwerp. Marlborough, on the alert, barred the way, and forced the French upon another line of march. Vendôme then moved to Soignies, and there halted at the distance of three short leagues from the allies, who firmly waited his attack. But the French marshal, instead of attacking, filed off to the edge of the field of Waterloo, where he again halted and threatened the city of Brussels. Marlborough followed, moving on a parallel line, and covered Brussels. Vendôme, quitting Waterloo, stretched still farther to the right, and menaced Louvain. By a most rapid night march, in the midst of torrents of rain, Marlborough put himself between Louvain and the French ; and thereupon, Vendôme fell back to the plain of Waterloo without firing a shot.

His skilful movements excited universal admiration, as did his brave resolution to stand an attack with a force

numerically so inferior to that of the enemy; but still Marlborough was not in a condition to undertake offensive operations.

On the evening of the 4th of July, Vendôme moved stealthily from Waterloo, and favoured by the Flemings, who disliked the English heretics and abhorred the Dutch, his advanced detachments took Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, and invested Oudenarde. The alarm in Brussels was very great, and even in the allied army there seemed to be a disposition to censure the great commander, as if the mischief had befallen through his misconduct, and not through treachery and the unreadiness of others. But for the prescience of the duke, and the rapidity with which his orders were executed, Oudenarde must have fallen at once, as the fortifications were in a crazy condition, and the garrison very weak: but before the French could come before it, Lord Chandos threw himself, with a good force, within the walls.

It was now the 9th of July. Marlborough covered Brussels, and Vendôme the commencing siege of Oudenarde, which place he was ordered to take at all hazards or at whatsoever cost. At this critical moment Marlborough was seriously ill;* but he took heart, and Prince Eugene was now with him. Knowing the imminency of some great combat, the prince had left even his foremost squadrons of cavalry behind him at Maestricht, and had pushed on, almost alone, to join his illustrious friend. The meeting was, on both sides, joyous; the duke congratulated the prince on the near prospect of a certain victory; as usual

* "The treachery of Ghent, continual marching, and some letters I have received from England (from the queen and the duchess), have so vexed me, that I was yesterday in so great a fever that the doctor would have persuaded me to have gone to Brussels; but, thank God, I am now better, and by the next post I hope to answer your letters. The States have used this country so ill, that I no ways doubt but all the towns in it will play us the same trick as Ghent, if they have the power."—Marlborough to Godolphin, July 9th 1708. Coxe.

there was but one will, one intention, one mind in the two commanders.

The allies must fight, or see other towns follow the example of Ghent and Bruges, and thus lose all that had been gained by the battle of Ramilies. But the Dutch deputies must be taken into council, and it was feared that they might be again perverse and obstinate. A council of war (always a disagreeable necessity) was called; the deputies, to the surprise of most people, were not very obstinate; and so it was resolved to attack Vendôme, in his position covering Oudenarde. "I was resolved," said Marlborough, "to venture everything rather than lose that place."

By a rapid march, on the 10th of July, the allies got possession of a camp at Lessines, before the French could reach it. This camp was the starting point for the battle on the morrow. The surrounding country has been admirably described by Coxe:—

"From the frontier of France to the confluence of the Scheldt and Lys, the surface consists of low hills and bold undulations, which contract the valley of the Scheldt in various places, till they gradually subside in the vicinity of Ghent. Human industry here exerts unremitting efforts, and the eye nowhere rests on a patch of heath, or even on a single acre in repose. On the bolder swells of the upland, which are generally denominated *couters*, corn predominates; on the lower, flax, clover, pease, and buckwheat. Woods or coppices are found only on the steep acclivities, where the plough cannot act, or in patches of plantations, except towards France, where the country is shaded by forests. Numerous villages and hamlets enliven this rich and varied surface; small farms and cottages are scattered in every direction; and at intervals appear the turrets of a castellated mansion, a convent, or abbey. Of the roads which form the communications between these countless dwellings, those across the *couters* are usually

bare, and the others are mostly fringed with underwood, or bordered with avenues. Towards the Scheldt, which winds along a valley comparatively low, are ranges of meadows, intersected with numerous drains and water-courses.

“At the distance of a mile north of Oudenarde, is the village of Eyne. Here the ground rises into a species of low but capacious amphitheatre. It sweeps along a moderately-sized plain, southward, to near the glacis of Oudenarde, where it is crowned by the village of Bevere, and numerous windmills. Turning westward, it then rises into another broad hill, under the name of the Boser Couter, and the highest point is near a *tilleul*, or lime-tree, and a windmill overlooking the village of Oycke. From thence the ground curves towards Marolen; and the eye, glancing over the narrow valley watered by the Norken, is arrested by another upland plain, which trends by Huyse, gradually sinking till it terminates near Asper. A line representing the chord of this semicircle, would commence about a league above the confluence of the Norken with the Scheldt, and traverse the plain of Heurne, which is nearly as high as the amphitheatre itself. Within this space, two scanty rivulets, gushing from the base of the hill of Oycke, at a small distance asunder, embrace a low tongue of land, the middle of which rises into a gentle elevation. The borders of these rivulets, and a part of the intervening surface, are intersected with inclosures, surrounding the farms and hamlets of Barwaen, Chobon, and Diepenbeck. At the source of one is the castellated mansion of Bevere, or Brian; at that of the other, the hamlet of Retelhoek, situated in a woody and steep recess. These streams, uniting near a public-house, called Schaerken, proceed partly in a double channel along a marshy bed to the Scheldt, near Eyne. The Norken, rising near Morlehem, beyond Oycke, runs for some distance almost parallel to the Scheldt; then, passing by Lede, Mullen, and Asper, it meets another streamlet from the west, and terminates in a species of canal, skirting the Scheldt to

a considerable distance below Gavre. The borders of the Norken, like those of the other rivulets, are fringed with underwood, coppices, and thickets; and from Mullen to Herlechem the roads are skirted with avenues. Behind, are inclosures surrounding a small plain, which terminates beyond the mill of Royegem. Between these is a hollow road, which leads up to the hill of Oycke.”*

This was an intricate and highly defensive country; but its advantages were, by Marlborough’s skill, turned against the French, who nearly always found themselves where they had no wish to be. It is due, however, to the military reputation of Marshal Vendôme to state, that he was not his own master in this campaign. Louis XIV. had sent one of his own grandsons, the inexperienced Duke of Burgundy, to share in the command: the duke had brought with him other elements of discord or disagreement, and the generals in the French camp seem always to have been disputing what *was to be done*, while Marlborough and Eugene *were doing*, with one will, and one idea.

“Legs win more battles than arms,” said Napoleon Bonaparte. It was now a trial of speed between the allies and the enemy. Marlborough’s object was to throw himself between Vendôme and the frontier of France, to sever his line of communication, and to force him to fight with his face towards Paris, and his back to Antwerp. This object was effected by the passage of the river Dender, and the occupation of the camp of Lessines. Seeing his own plans thus disconcerted, Vendôme fell back upon Gavre, resolving to cross the Scheldt at that point. Marlborough followed in the hope of attacking him while he was crossing the Scheldt. The brave, active, intelligent Colonel Cadogan (one of the very best of all our officers), pushed forward at day-dawn on the 11th of July, with a strong advanced guard, threw bridges over the Scheldt, and safely crossed at a point between Gavre and Oudenarde, with twelve bat-

* Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough.

talions of foot, and nearly all the allied horse. Cadogan was kept in check by a part of the French army, under Biron, who had got across, and who, after some sharp skirmishing, retained possession of the village of Eynes. Rapid as they were, Marlborough and Eugene were too late to catch Vendôme, either on their side of the river, or *in transitu*; the French were all over the Scheldt, and not without hopes of crushing Cadogan, and cutting off the advanced guard before the mass of the allies could cross. It appears, however, that Vendôme's troops were not in hand; that he could not credit the rapidity with which the allies had been marched over nearly five leagues of an intricate, difficult country, nor believe that so great a force could be thrown across the Scheldt in so very short a time. At last the Duke of Burgundy advanced twenty squadrons to dispute the passage of the river; but twenty squadrons could not face the allies who were already over, and the squadrons were withdrawn, and moved along the road leading to Ghent.

Violent altercations arose at the French head-quarters. In deference to the rank of his royal highness, many of the French generals preferred the opinions of the inexperienced Duke of Burgundy to those of the veteran Vendôme, who had earned his high reputation in many campaigns. "My lord," said Vendôme to Burgundy, "it is too late to try and march upon Ghent: in half an hour we shall have the enemy upon us; the heads of their columns are in sight: we must attack them instantly, or keep the start we have of them, by moving off this instant." "But for your own instances, I would not have halted at all," said the Duke of Burgundy. Vendôme replied, despondingly, "The mischief of it is, instead of halting behind the Scheldt, we have brought our army into an enclosed country, full of hedges, copses, and villages, where our troops must fight separately, and, to all appearance, at a disadvantage."* But, before

* French History of Marlborough.

these disputes were over, Marlborough had made it impossible for them to get into any better country. They must needs fight where they were.

Vendôme had weakened his army by sending detachments to occupy the towns which treachery had given him, and Marlborough had been reinforced. Still, however, the French exceeded the allies by 5,000 men, the respective numbers being 85,000 and 80,000—a vast host, either of them, to move, direct, and hold in hand.

The hard fighting commenced a little after three in the afternoon, in front of the village of Eyne, near to which brave Cadogan had kept his ground. The French fought gallantly, but were soon driven out of the village, leaving behind them, as prisoners, three entire battalions with the brigadier-general. The rest were either killed or intercepted in their flight. Eight squadrons of Hanoverians and the quartermasters of the allied army, then advanced upon the plain of Heurne, to charge the French cavalry, who, perceiving the destruction of their infantry near the village, endeavoured to retire into the enclosures behind; but before they could effect their purpose, they were overtaken, routed, and driven across the Norken, among the columns of their own army, which were in the act of forming on the farther side of the stream. Twelve standards fell into the hands of the victors. The electoral Prince of Hanover, afterwards George II., with General Schulemburg, Count Lusky, and other volunteers of high rank, had animated the troops by charging gallantly at the head of the Hanoverian squadrons. Count Lusky was killed, and the electoral prince had a horse shot under him.

The mass of Vendôme's army was now drawn up on the high ground of Lede, Huyse and Maldegghem, in two lines, with a reserve. The greater part of the cavalry were posted on the right, opposite Oycke, the left extended to Mullem, the front being covered by the Norken and its rough banks. It was four o'clock in the afternoon. The allies had not

quite formed their lines, when the Duke of Burgundy directed General Grimaldi to lead sixteen squadrons across the Norken, apparently for the purpose of ascertaining whether the French right wing could advance, occupy the space between two rivulets, and then commence the general attack by falling upon Marlborough's left. But Grimaldi, on reaching the brink of the first of these two rivulets, found that the Prussian cavalry was already formed, and that the British were advancing; and hereupon he fell back to a small plain near the mill of Royeghem. Vendôme now directed his left to advance, with a view of bringing both wings into action together. But the Duke of Burgundy countermanded his order, under pretence that an impassable morass separated the French from the allies on that side, although Vendôme had himself traversed the pretended swamp only an hour before. Vendôme's left wing remained in position, and another invaluable hour was lost to him.

Marlborough observing the right wing and centre of the enemy passing the defiles in their front, judged that they intended to attack him on his own left wing in front of the chatcau of Bevere. He, therefore, called up Cadogan with his twelve battalions of foot to reinforce the left; and he lined all the copses and hedges near Cadogan's position, and between him and the Norken, with good light troops. Marlborough himself, at the head of the Prussian horse, now took post on the edge of the little plain of Diepenbeck, over which it was evident that the French would make their first and most desperate attack. While this movement was in progress, the whole first column of the first line of the right wing, consisting entirely of British, formed rapidly on the height of Bevere.

The French onslaught was as foreseen, and it was made by some of their very best troops, including both the French and Swiss foot-guards. Four battalions of the allies, on the edge of a streamlet, held the thirty battalions of the enemy in check, until Cadogan came up to the rescue. The Duke of

Argyle, who led the British infantry, hastened also into action with twenty battalions. A heavy conflict of musketry ensued, each battalion being engaged separately in the fields and enclosures which bordered the rivulets. The French, however, gradually prolonged their line, till they outflanked some Prussian infantry on the left of the British, and after pushing them back, occupied Barwaen and the farm of Banlancy. But Count Lottum, with the second column of infantry, consisting of Prussians and Hanoverians, advanced in his turn, recovered the lost ground, and drove the enemy back. It was now six o'clock in the evening, and the firing was becoming general. As the lines extended, and more battalions came into action, partial conflicts ceased, and a general roar of musketry spread along the whole of the outer portion of the semicircle formed by the two rivulets which wind near Schaerken.

Marlborough and Eugene, who had hitherto remained close together, now separated. The duke complimented the prince with the command of the right, comprising the native British troops, whose valour in action he had often witnessed and applauded. That Eugene might be properly supported, Marlborough, very soon after, sent Count Lottum with twenty battalions to join him, and prolong the allied right. Thus nearly sixty battalions fought under Eugene, while only twenty remained with the duke.

The prince was hotly pressed when Count Lottum came up with him; for the corps of Cadogan had been driven out of their coverts and avenues into the plain. With Lottum's battalion to aid him, Eugene, however, again advanced, threw back the enemy, who were making sure of victory, and broke their first line. Taking instant advantage of that disorder, General Natzmer, with the Prussian gendarmes and cuirassiers, rushed through the gap, charged the second line, broke through it, and reached the small plain near the chapel of Royeghem. But, on that plain, Natzmer's career was checked by a line of the French horse-guards in reserve,

and by a dreadful fire of musketry which flashed from every copse, hedgerow, and bush. Not a cannon was fired; but the awful crash was heard at the distance of several leagues. After losing half his men, and receiving himself several gun-shot wounds and sabre cuts, the brave count escaped with the utmost difficulty, by leaping over a very broad ditch.

While the action thus raged on the right, Marlborough, with the Hanoverian and Dutch battalions, pressed forward on the left, from the farm of Baulancy, and the hamlet of Barwaen. The French disputed every inch of ground with him, setting fire to the houses which they could no longer defend, firing from all the hedge-rows, and defending one enclosure after the other. At the hamlet of Diepenbeck, Marlborough was brought to a pause, and his Dutch and Hanoverians were falling round him very fast. But his quick eye discovered that the right of the enemy extended only to the steep acclivity of Oyeke, and that they had neglected to occupy the commanding ground on that hill-top. Of this error he instantly profited. "Seize that hill," said he, "and turn the flank of the enemy's right, and cut them off from the main body." Sturdy old Overkirk, though bending under years and bodily infirmities, executed the decisive movement with the greatest alacrity, having with him twenty Dutch and Danish battalions, and all the reserve cavalry. The French flank was turned, they were driven from their woody covers round the castle of Bevere, and the mill of Oyeke, and the plateaux behind it, were occupied by the Dutch and Danes. The allied army thus formed a vast semicircle round the right wing of the French, who could only partially and very inconveniently communicate with their centre and left, through the ravines and passes of Marolen, and by the mill of Royeghem.

Marlborough now urged Overkirk to cut off the remaining communication of the enemy. The old marshal

entrusted the execution of this fresh movement to the brave young Prince of Orange. Accompanied by General Oxenstiern, the prince rushed with the infantry down the height which overlooks Marolen, penetrated through the ravines, formed a new line between the ravines and the French, and was sustained by twelve squadrons of Danes under Count Tilly. The enemy were greatly dismayed by so unexpected an attack on their rear. A corps of French grenadiers, covered by the hedges, and supported by the household cavalry of Louis XIV., sustained the first shock.

The onset was visible from the right and centre. It was growing dark, and this rendered the frequent volleys of musketry the more dreadful to the eye. The French corps were all hurled together, the allies were crowding round them in a small and still contracting circle ; the whole of the little plain became like the working crater of a volcano. The French dragoons made a noble effort to clear the ravines, in order to favour the escape of their infantry, and cover the retreat of their household squadrons ; but they were all cut to pieces, or taken prisoners ; and the gendarmerie suffered no less severely from the charge of the Danish horse.

Marlborough, in the mean while, had continued to gain ground, and now he had established his line between Choban and Diepenbeck, leaning towards Eugene and the right wing of the army. Vendôme made a gallant effort to rescue his right from destruction : he dismounted from his horse, and led the infantry, near Mullen, to the rescue of their companions. But this body, inferior in numbers, subdued in spirit, watched by Eugene, and entangled by the intricacy of the ground, could make no impression. The immoveable British cavalry faced them, Prince Eugene and Overkirk were approaching, and would soon give the hand to each other, uniting the right and left wings of the allies.

The contending hosts were now completely enveloped

in darkness, and their several positions were discernible only by the flashes of musketry which rolled round the narrowing circle of the doomed French. Eugene, and the extremity of the left, under the Prince of Orange, came close together in the dark, and mistaking each other for enemies, they exchanged some volleys; but by the exertions of the generals and officers a timely stop was put to the fire, and the mistake explained. But to prevent the recurrence of a like blunder in the dark, which might have proved very destructive to the allies, orders were issued, about nine o'clock at night, that the troops should halt as they stood, and suffer the enemy to escape. To this order numbers of the enemy, and, no doubt, not a few of the allies, owed their safety; for there was no telling Englishman from Frenchman, friend from foe, in that darkness and thick smoke.

Favoured by the obscurity and by the halt which had been ordered, the broken French corps fled in tumultuous crowds. Some thousands slipped unperceived through a gap in the allied line, near the castle of Bevere; others endeavoured to rejoin their left wing, in the direction of Mullen; and considerable numbers, mistaking their way, or finding no issue, wandered to the posts of the allies, and were captured. In the midst of this scene of confusion, Prince Eugene ordered several drummers in his camp to beat the French retreat, and the Protestant refugee officers to give the rallying words of the different French corps,* who were known to be left in the enclosures; and he thus succeeded in capturing crowds of fugitives without resistance.

Vendôme vainly endeavoured to restore some order to his left wing and centre, which had suffered comparatively little, and which were now joined: he was obliged to give the order to retreat, and the word was no sooner given,

* "A moi, Champagne!" "A moi, Picardie!" "A moi, Piedmont!" etc.

than generals and privates, horse and foot, hurried off in the utmost disorder towards Ghent. He could persuade only twenty-five squadrons, and a few battalions to remain united, and with these he, in person, covered the headlong flight of the rest. "Night," says Colonel Blackader, "put a screen of darkness between us and them." "Had we been so happy," says Marlborough, "as to have had two more hours of daylight, I believe we should have made an end to this war."

The allies, wearied with long marching and hard fighting, slept on the field of battle until the dawn of day. Marlborough then detached forty squadrons of horse, and a corps of infantry, to follow up Vendôme, repairing himself to succour the wounded, who were lying in heaps around him, mixed with the dead and the mournful wrecks of war. By his orders all haste was made to collect the survivors, and to bestow on all, whether friends or enemies, the care and relief which circumstances would permit. Many were thus snatched from a lingering and painful death, and afterwards blessed the name of their conqueror. The French lost 100 standards, 6,000 men killed and wounded, besides 9,000 prisoners, including 700 officers. Counting the deserters who afterwards joined Marlborough, their total loss did not fall short of 20,000 men. The loss of the allies, in killed and wounded, was above 4,000. The Pretender, son of the expelled James II., was at Oudenarde. Two very different accounts are given of his conduct; the party least friendly to him say that he acted like a coward, and, in company with his highness the Duke of Burgundy, *saw* the engagement from the church steeple of a neighbouring village, and was among the very first to fly: according to the Duke of Berwick, his half-brother, he shewed "much courage and coolness in the battle." In regard to his rival or successful competitor George, the electoral Prince of Hanover, there is no dispute or doubt; his conduct was that of a brave and sturdy cavalry officer, and he led a

charge of German horse which routed the celebrated French guard.

The battle of Oudenarde was a battle without artillery. The rapid movements on the part of both armies which preceded the engagement, had not permitted either to drag their cumbrous trains along with them, and the nature of the ground prevented their making use of the very few lighter pieces that were brought up. There were some brilliant cavalry charges and counter-charges; but the battle was almost wholly fought by the infantry, and was won by skilful manœuvring and by the musket and bayonet.*

As was his wont, Marlborough, the morning after his great victory, wrote to the duchess and to Lord Treasurer Godolphin. The letter to his wife shewed how much he was still perplexed and embarrassed, by the humour of the queen and the state of political affairs in England. "Our foot, on both sides," said he, "having been all engaged, has occasioned much blood; but I thank God the English have suffered less than any of the other troops; none of our English horse having been engaged. I do, and you must give thanks to God for his goodness in protecting and making me the instrument of so much happiness to the queen and nation, *if she will please to make use of it.*" †

To the lord treasurer he declared that he had departed somewhat from his usual caution, and overstepped the rules of military science which he laid down for himself; and that he would not have fought the battle of Oudenarde in the way in which he had done it, if an unusual effort and a daring risk had not been imperatively demanded at

* Archdeacon Coxe, and the documents by him quoted. Southey. General Sir G. Murray's Marlborough Despatches.

The duke's own letters about the battle of Oudenarde are as brief as usual. The longest account—and that occupies only two octavo pages, in print—was written to Count Piper, minister of Charles XII.—Sir G. Murray, vol. iv.

Archdeacon Coxe.

this crisis of affairs. And, indeed, but for this victory, the grand alliance would have gone to wreck.

“July 12th,—I have been so very uneasy, and in so great a hurry for some days, that I should not be able to write, were I not supported by the good success we had yesterday. The particulars you will have from Lord Stair, who will give you this. You know his pretensions, and the friendship I have for him; and I will own to you, that I hope her Majesty may have, by this message, an excuse for others, if she is pleased to* distinguish him at this time.

“I must ever acknowledge the goodness of God, in the success he was pleased to give us; for I believe Lord Stair will tell you, they were in as strong a post as is possible to be found; but you know when I left England, I was positively resolved to endeavour by all means a battle, thinking nothing else would make the queen’s business go on well. This reason only made me venture the battle yesterday, otherwise I did give them too much advantage; but the good of the queen and my country shall always be preferred by me, before any personal concern; for I am very sensible if I had miscarried, I should have been blamed. I hope I have given such a blow to their foot, that they will not be able to fight any more this year. My head aches so terribly that I must say no more.”†

Few great men have been more exposed to the stings of ingratitude than the Duke of Marlborough. This Scottish Lord Stair, for whom we find him making such earnest instances to the queen and the premier, abandoned his friend and patron as soon as he found it his interest so to do. Stair was a brave soldier, a general of some skill, and a very accomplished diplomatist; but, like nearly all

* By conferring on him a British peerage.

† Letter to Lord Godolphin, as given by Archdeacon Coxe.

the public men of the day, he was envious of the duke's supremacy, and wanting in principle.

The greater part of the 12th of July, the day after the battle, was spent by the two great commanders in concerting plans for their ulterior designs. On the morning of the 13th, Eugene repaired to Brussels, for the purpose of hastening the march of his own army (the army from the Moselle), which had now reached the vicinity of that city. The prince also engaged to send out detachments for the protection of Flanders, and to superintend the conveyance of the heavy artillery and stores, which were to be sent to the duke from Maestricht and the great towns of Holland.

But Prince Eugene's was not the only army which had come from the Moselle, for the French army which had been posted in the valley of that river was now approaching Flanders and Brabant, and was put under the command of Marlborough's brave and skilful nephew, the Duke of Berwick, the hero of Almanza, who had been removed out of Spain, where he would have preferred to stay, by court intrigue and something which very nearly resembled a dishonest trick.

Aware of the approach of Berwick, Marlborough, at midnight on the 13th, despatched Count Lottum, with fifty squadrons and thirty battalions, to possess himself of the lines which Vendôme had constructed from Ypres to Warneton, for the purpose of covering the country between the Scheldt and the Lys. The main army followed Count Lottum in the morning, and took up a position near Helchin. On the following day, the duke resumed his march, and on the road received the glad intelligence that Lottum had forced the lines and had taken 500 prisoners. This operation was effected at the very moment when Berwick was hastening to the spot, and exhorting the officers to defend the lines to the last extremity. Hastening forward, Marlborough crossed the Lys near Menin, and on the evening of the 15th, established his head-

quarters at Werwick. On the 16th he wrote to Godolphin, "We are now masters of marching where we please. . . . If we had been six hours later, I am afraid we should not have been able to have forced these lines, for M. de la Motte was got with his little army to Ypres, and the Duke of Berwick was at the same time at Lille." Unluckily the treacherous conduct of Ghent and Bruges had deprived Marlborough of cannon, and of the other means necessary to sieges.

On the 25th of July, he was joined by the army of Prince Eugene, and a few days later, Vendôme was strengthened by the army of the Duke of Berwick. The French, now 100,000 strong, had taken post in a camp behind the canal of Bruges, in front of Ghent, and this camp they had strongly fortified. Marlborough was between him and Paris, but Vendôme hoped that the presence of so great an army in his rear would prevent the duke from making any extensive incursions into France, although several high roads lay open to the allies.

Marlborough, however, was quite capable of a daring design. He knew that the French troops were sorely discouraged,* and that the French people near the frontier, quite weary of the war, were anticipating the return of peace through the advance of the allies, which they not unreasonably calculated would bring the proud court of Versailles to terms. Thus the duke really proposed, that leaving the French fortified towns to themselves, the allied army should penetrate by the northern frontier and advance towards the heart of France, shewing that a naval expedition, fitted out in England, could co-operate on the coast,

* "The Duke of Vendôme's army," said Marlborough, "is so frightened, that I am very confident if we could get them out of their entrenchments, and from behind the canal of Ghent and Bruges, we should beat them with half their numbers, especially their foot: this is one of their reasons for their staying where they are."—Letter to Lord Godolphin, dated July 23rd.

and keep the troops well supplied. But the design seemed too bold even to Prince Eugene, and it, of course, encountered the decided opposition of the States-General and their field-deputies. On the 26th of July, the duke wrote to the premier, "What you apprehend, in yours of the 8th, of the States is very just; for by what I hear from Buys, it is plain that they think enough is done for peace, and I am afraid they will not willingly give their consent for the marching their army into France, which certainly, if it succeeded, would put a happy end to the war. I have acquainted Prince Eugene with the earnest desire we have for our marching into France. He thinks it impracticable, till we have Lille for a *place d'armes* and magazine; and then he thinks we may make a very great inroad, but not be able to winter, though we might be helped by the fleet, unless we were masters of some fortified towns. If it depended upon Pensionary Heinsius, he is so honest a man that he would not at this time think of peace; but he is in his nature so timorous, that he will never contradict, whatever the inclination of the States may be. The letter I send you from M. Buys was written before they knew of the loss of Tortosa,* by which you may be sure their inclinations for peace will increase. I am assured that if this action had not happened, some proposal of peace was to have been made towards the end of August.†

The Duke of Wellington and Marshal Blucher advanced from Waterloo upon Paris in 1815, without caring for Lille or the other French fortresses; but they left no army of a hundred thousand men in their rear, the broken forces of Napoleon Bonaparte flying in their front. Yet, considering how few troops the French had to throw between Paris and the frontier, and how long a time must have

* Tortosa, one of the last of the strongholds of Spain which remained in the hands of the confederates, had surrendered to the Duke of Orleans on the 11th of July.

† Letter to Godolphin, in Coxe.

passed before they could bring up troops from Spain, or any other quarter, there can be little doubt that the bold, forward movement projected by Marlborough would, if properly seconded by the fleet, have been attended with success, and a most advantageous conclusion of the war. But it was not to be. "I really believe," said the duke, in a moment of ill-humour, "that all things in war are governed by destiny." The affrighted French people were already offering large sums of money to the allies for an exemption from forced military contributions.

There was nothing for it but to go and lay siege to the great frontier fortress of Lille, the possession of which would at least give the allies a firm footing on French ground. But everything for the siege had to be brought by land from a distance, as the French, in their fortified camp by Ghent, commanded the navigation of the Scheldt and the Lys, stopping all communication by water, and as Vendôme could both keep the Dutch in a continual alarm, and give great trouble to Marlborough's convoys. The requisite means of transport were also enormous: 16,000 horses being required to drag the siege artillery alone.* When in a line of march, this train stretched over fifteen miles. Prince Eugene protected it with fifty-three battalions, and ninety squadrons, Marlborough himself being ready, at a moment's notice, to support the prince, if necessary. Between these two illustrious men there was the same absence of all jealousy and difference of opinion that there had always been. "I dare say," said the duke, "that Prince Eugene and I shall never differ about our laurels." So well were their measures taken, that, though Vendôme with 80,000 men lay on one flank of the long line of march, and Berwick with 30,000 men on the other, not a gun was taken or a single shot fired. The enormous convoy passing by Soignies and near the field of Waterloo, reached the duke in the vicinity of Helchin, on the 12th of August.

* Letter to Lord Godolphin.

This consummate and most successful operation extorted the wonder and admiration even of the enemy. A French writer exclaims, "Posterity will scarcely believe the fact, though it is an indubitable truth. Never was a daring enterprise conducted with more skill, or greater circumspection."*

In the mean while, our light troops were making incursions into the French territory, and spreading alarm far and wide. Count Tilly, riding a few leagues into Artois, scattered the cavalry and infantry of the only small force that was at hand to oppose him, levied contributions at will, and returned to the duke in perfect safety.

Lille was partially invested by the Prince of Orange as early as the 11th of August, and the investment was completed by Prince Eugene on the 13th, when the camp of artillery amounted to 120 pieces of heavy cannon, forty large mortars, twenty howitzers, and 400 ammunition wagons. "This day," wrote the duke to Lord Godolphin, on the 13th, "Lille is fully invested. I pray God to bless the undertaking. What I most fear is, the want of powder for so great an undertaking, as our engineers fear that we must take the town before we can attack the castle."

Lille, considered the masterpiece of Vauban, was a place of enormous strength, and it was garrisoned by Marshal Boufflers, an experienced, first-rate officer, with 15,000 choice troops, well provided with the means of defence.† The most skilful engineers of France had been thrown into the place, and were now employed by Boufflers in giving it additional strength. Marshal Vendôme had declared that an able commander, like Marlborough or Eugene, would

* Fenquieres' *Annales Militaires*.

† Boufflers was commandant of Namur in 1695, when that place, after a long and heroic resistance, capitulated to King William III. On learning that Boufflers had taken the command at Lille, Marlborough had said, "I hope he will not have better success than he had at Namur, if we are once so happy as to get up our cannon."

never venture to engage in the siege at all; and, for some time, the siege was the subject of general ridicule in the French camps.

It was foreseen by Marlborough, and by every one else, that the siege of Lille would be arduous and long. The celebrity of the place—the great bulwark of France on this side—and the fame of the generals engaged, attracted great numbers to the siege. Such attraction was common at the period, officers of different nations going to a great siege as to a practical school; but seldom have so many illustrious personages been drawn to a camp as were now assembled to witness the operations of Marlborough, Eugene, Boufflers, Vendôme, and Berwick. Among those present in the allied camp were Augustus, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland (dethroned, as king, by Charles XII.), the Landgrave of Hesse, the electoral Prince of Hanover, who had done so well on the field of Oudenarde, and Munich and Schwerin, now young officers, but afterwards so celebrated under Frederic the Great in the Seven Years War. A boy also deserves to be mentioned, on account of his after fame and his present romantic adventure. Augustus, the elector-king, had a natural son, fourteen years old, but already filled with martial ardour: being denied, on account of his tender years, the pleasure of attending his father to the camp, this stripling baulked the vigilance of his guardians, fled from Dresden, secretly and on foot, and reached the scene of warfare alone and penniless. Such a boy could not but turn out a great soldier. He became Marshal Saxe.

While fifty battalions were employed in the siege (ten to be always in the trenches, and to be relieved in succession), Marlborough and Eugene with the rest of the army stood ready to receive Vendôme and Berwick, should they venture to quit their lines. More than once, Vendôme declared that he would attempt the relief of Lille, even if it should cost him another general action. Marlborough most earnestly desired the chance, having a full assurance of victory, although the

allied forces, even including those who were constantly employed in siege work, were weaker by many battalions and squadrons than the disposable French army. But both Vendôme and Berwick resolved not to attack, unless they could do it at an advantage or by some surprise, and this was not likely ever to be allowed them by such skilful and vigilant commanders as Marlborough and Eugene; and thus, though various movements and demonstrations were made, nothing was seriously attempted on our lines during the siege.

Trenches were opened by Eugene on the evening of the 23rd of August, before the lines of circumvallation were quite finished. At the dawn of next day the cannonade commenced; the first gun on their right being fired by Eugene, and the first gun on the left by the Prince of Orange, each using his own hand in the work. The second parallel was made during the night of the 24th. The 25th was a day of heavy firing and hard fighting; the allies gaining some advantages, and sustaining some checks and serious losses.

As the siege went on, and as the French would not attack them, Marlborough and Eugene were desirous of moving out to attack the French. According to Berwick himself, he and Vendôme must have been routed if this design had been carried into effect; but the French were again saved by the veto of the Dutch deputies, who argued that it was very useless to fight, as Lille must fall without any battle.

That place proved even stronger than had been expected, and its defenders had displayed a rare fertility of invention and resources. In a premature attempt at storming, made on the 5th of September, the allies lost nearly 2,000 in killed, and as many in wounded. On the 20th of September, a fresh assault was made. Marlborough, who had previously visited the trenches in person, detached 5,000 English from the covering army to head the storming parties—5,000 picked men, the bravest of the brave. The

fighting was awful; the French, working their guns under cover, maintaining an incessant fire of grape and musketry. Three times the allied troops recoiled, but only to return with more fury to the assault. On the fourth advance Eugene himself headed them, shouting, "Remember Blenheim, Ramilies, and Oudenarde." Here the prince was struck on the forehead by a ball, which grazed him above the left eye. His hat had just before been knocked off his head by a grape-shot. "That was a lucky miss," said the hero. After a deadly struggle of two hours, and not before, the allies established themselves in a demi-bastion, and on the covered way in the rear of the great breach; but 5,000 of their number lay killed or wounded in the ditch or among the works, and of this number good 3,000 were English.

Unfortunately, when his blood had time to cool, it was found that brave Eugene's wound was rather serious. This, for some time, confined the prince to his quarters, and threw the whole management of the siege upon Marlborough, who had also to watch Vendôme and Berwick with the covering army. The care and anxiety in which this additional command involved the duke, were increased by the unexpected discovery that the stores began to fail, and that there was not sufficient ammunition to continue the attack more than four days longer. He was even importuned by the Dutch deputies to give up the siege altogether. At the same time, he discovered that Prince Eugene had been deceived by some of his own officers and by his own storekeepers; that he had been kept totally ignorant of the low state of his stores, and that a scandalous system of speculation and plunder had been applied to the ammunition, etc.

His fatigues were excessive: he was almost constantly on horseback, riding from the lines of his covering army to the siege, or back from the siege to the lines, to see that all continued quiet there, or sitting in the saddle by the trenches in order to direct the besiegers. On the 23rd of September, he was in the trenches directing a grand

attack, and animating the troops who, under his eye, made another good lodgement.

As stores could no longer be procured from Brussels, Maestricht, and the towns in Holland, it was necessary to look for them in another quarter, or really to give up the siege. There was plenty of gunpowder at Ostend.

That English armament, which was to have co-operated along the French coast, and from which marvellous things had been expected, had not remained in embryo, nor had it been recalled or sent to a new destination, as frequently happened in these days. It had only been grossly mismanaged. The home government had conferred the command of the troops embarked on General Erle, a loitering, timid, silly man, suffering from the gout, and better fit for an hospital than the field. He had been ordered to effect a descent either on the coast of Brittany, or on the coast of Normandy; but he had done neither, and had returned to the Downs to tell what he could not do. From the Downs he had been despatched to Ostend, and at that little sea-port he now lay wrapped up in his flannels. His troops, which were to be joined to Marlborough's army, had been landed, as well as an abundant store of ammunition and other requisites. But the difficulty was to get these up to Lille, and to baulk a numerous and watchful enemy who lay between them and the siege. When Erle had partly drained an inundation which the French had caused between Ostend and Nieuport, to stop the road to Lille, and had thrown down a few bridges for a passage of wagons, he could do little else. But fortunately there were many officers in the field who had been trained under Marlborough, and had profited by his lessons and example; and the duke himself, between the siege and his lines, devised the plan for bringing up the supplies in safety. From the army of observation, 700 wagons were despatched to receive the supplies. Vendôme and Berwick both panted to attempt the capture or destruction of the convoy; but

the task was finally confided to Count de la Motte, who, from long residence in these districts, was supposed to be thoroughly acquainted with the country. Accordingly the count was sent to Bruges with 20,000 men, a force considered as more than sufficient to crush any covering force that the allies could spare from their main army.

In the first instance, Marlborough had sent out only twelve battalions of infantry, and 1,500 horse; but on learning the movements of Count de la Motte, he sent out a new detachment of twelve battalions under General Webb, to advance as far as Tourout, in order to protect the march of the convoy through the wood of Wynendale; and soon afterwards brave Cadogan marched out to Hoghlede with twenty-six squadrons and twelve battalions, to protect the passage of the convoy between Tourout and the camp.

On the 27th of September, the convoy departed from Ostend, crossed the canal at Nieuport, and pushing on by night got in the following morning near to the wood of Wynendale. From the moment it commenced its march all was vigilance and activity along the line of its passage. General Webb threw forward 1,600 infantry to strengthen a weak corps from Ostend, which General Erle had posted at Oudenburg. This force arrived just in time to prevent the occupation of Oudenburg (by which the convoy must pass) by the enemy. The 1,600 infantry then covered the convoy, and returned leisurely to rejoin Webb at Tourout. Meanwhile, Cadogan's twenty-six squadrons of horse had reached Hoghlede, and Count Lottum, with 150 dragoons, was sent forward to explore the road by which the convoy was advancing. Lottum soon fell back to Tourout, giving the alarm, and bringing the intelligence that several French squadrons had got upon the road, and were approaching Ichteghem, or Issighem. Upon this General Webb moved forward with the infantry, Count Lottum, with his 150 dragoons, forming the advance-guard. On reaching Wy-

nendale, Webb caught sight of the enemy, who were in great force, and drawn up on an open space beyond that wood and a low long coppice. Webb immediately halted his little army, which did not exceed 8,000 men, and rode forward with the 150 horse to reconnoitre and amuse the French. As fast as the allied infantry arrived, they were posted in order of battle, in the opening between the wood of Wynendale and the coppice, where the quartermasters and grenadiers were already stationed. Scarcely had six battalions formed ere De la Motte commenced a heavy cannonade; but the small party of horse kept its ground with such firmness, that Webb had time to complete his dispositions. His troops formed two lines, the left wing extending a little beyond the coppice, to prevent the enemy from turning that flank, and the right wing resting on the wood of Wynendale. In the wood on the right, a regiment was placed in ambuscade, and another regiment was concealed in the coppice on the left, while, on either side, small parties of grenadiers were posted among the thick bushes and brushwood, with orders not to shew themselves, and not to move until they could take the advancing enemy in flank.

De la Motte, who had hoped to get into this defile (through which the 700 wagons must pass) before the allies could reach it, was greatly disconcerted at finding them there before him, and at being ignorant of their numbers. After a long cannonade, during which he formed his troops in several lines, he advanced with a show of great confidence up the ravine. He was received with such a fire from the ambuscade in the wood, that his left wing gave way and doubled on the centre. The fire of the opposite ambuscade in the coppice was then opened, and presently threw the whole French line into confusion. They, however, still advanced, and charging with their cavalry, they broke two of Webb's battalions; but reinforcements moving up from the rear, they were again

repulsed, with a great loss of men and horses. De la Motte made a third attempt; but the fire in front and on both their flanks again threw back his wings on the centre, and the French fled in the utmost dismay. Neither the threats nor the example of their officers could induce them to try another charge. As the action was closing, Cadogan came up with some squadrons of horse, and offered to charge the disorderly retreating enemy; but it was growing dark, and it was not thought advisable to follow so superior a force of cavalry; and therefore the commanders contented themselves with securing the invaluable convoy, which during the fighting had glided off in the rear of the wood of Wynendale. That evening the 700 wagons reached Rousselaer; the next day they got safely to Menin, where they were received with transports of joy and exultation; and on the last day of September, they passed in perfect order through the lines of Marlborough's camp.

The whole work had been as ably executed as it was skilfully planned. "Our loss in killed and wounded," wrote the duke, "is very near 1,000; by what the enemy left dead on the place, they must have lost at least three times as many as we. They had above double our number; all our horse, except 300, and 2,000 foot, being sent on before, for the security of the convoy, so that there were not above 8,000 men; and it is said, by the French officers who were left wounded on the field of battle, that they had forty battalions, and forty-six squadrons, as also cannon."

Remarkably gentle in the censure of any error or shortcoming, on the part of his officers, Marlborough was always very warm in his praise of their good services. He thus wrote to the premier:—

"Webb and Cadogan have, on this occasion, as they always will do, behaved themselves extremely well. The success of this vigorous action is, in a great measure, owing to them. If they had not succeeded, and our convoy had

been lost, the consequence must have been the raising of the siege the next day. All her Majesty's subjects have had the good fortune this campaign, in all actions, to distinguish themselves, so that I should not do them justice if I did not beg the Queen, that when this campaign shall be ended, she will be pleased to make a promotion among the generals of this army only, which will be a mark of her favour and their merit; for hitherto, though almost all the action has been in this army, yet every general has advanced equally with them, though two parts of three of them have not so much as served this war.*

At this moment, Mrs. Masham was driving a great trade in military promotions. Drawing-room heroes, and officers of the guards, who had never seen any service beyond the parade-ground, in spite of Marlborough's frequent remonstrances, were put over the heads of brave men who had fought and bled in many campaigns. The short, sad story of the father of Laurence Sterne, as told by his son,† may serve to explain the condition of too many of our veteran officers during this war and after its conclusion; but many other proofs of their absolute destitution may be found in the newspapers and other publications of those days.

The safe arrival of the convoy gave new life to the army; and the recovery of Prince Eugene relieved the duke from a load of care and labour. The besiegers advanced the sap, raised new batteries, and made fresh lodgements on the enemy's works. Boufflers, though still resisting, with infinite skill as well as gallantry, was evidently at his last gasp. In order to do something in his aid, Vendôme moved with a strong detachment from the Scheldt, passed through Ghent, joined Count de la Motte, reinforced the garrison of Nieuport, opened the sluices, and inundated the whole country.

* Letter to Lord Godolphin, dated October 1st.

† See Sterne's Autobiographical Sketch, prefixed to Tristram Shandy.

He thus hoped to render the communication quite impracticable, by intercepting the passage between Ostend and Leffinghen, at which latter post were stationed 1,600 of the allied troops. Vendôme, having done all this, encamped at Oudenburg, as if determined to stay there.

Taking with him 110 squadrons, and sixty battalions, Marlborough marched to look after these French. On Sunday, the 7th of October, he had his head-quarters at Rousselaer, and on Monday he advanced to Wynendale, expecting that afternoon to get sight of Vendôme. But as soon as the French marshal had heard of his approach, he had decamped, and he was now marching with all speed for Brussels.

But as Vendôme had not carried his great inundation with him, and as the besiegers were again in want of ammunition and stores, it became necessary to devise some new expedient. It was the duke who suggested that the ammunition should be packed in skins, and conveyed in flat-bottomed boats across the inundated country from Ostend to Leffinghen, and conveyed hence to camp on the backs of horses, or in carts, mounted on very high wheels. Any failure of the supplies would, even at this moment, have obliged the allies to raise the siege.

But devices and resources were not all on one side. Seeing that his inundation was not enough, Vendôme resorted to new expedients. By his order, the French naval officer who commanded in the neighbouring port of Dunkirk, came round to Nieuport, and there prepared a curious flotilla of galleys and small vessels requiring little water, and proper to act on the canals; and, on board this flotilla, Vendôme placed artillery and troops, who were supported by fifty companies of grenadiers, and 1,000 dragoons—the latter force moving in detachments along the banks of the canals, or across the plashy country, as occasion required. A species of amphibious warfare now took place; and a vigorous, though generally an ineffectual cannonade was

kept up by the French, as well on the allied posts as on the flat-bottomed boats employed in conveying our stores. In this singular warfare, Cadogan, ever active, intelligent, diligent, and brave, particularly distinguished himself; and it was mainly through him that our convoys were brought up in safety, in spite of the batteries and armed galleys of the French.

At this moment, Marlborough was deeply grieved by the death of his brave and faithful friend Overkirk. That veteran, disregarding all warnings, continued to act with his usual alacrity and daring till within a few hours of his death, being under arms all night, and taking part in whatever was in progress. Worn out with the fatigues of the service more than by the infirmities of age, he expired in the camp at Rousselaer on the 18th of October, in the 67th year of his age, while Marlborough was in consultation with Prince Eugene, the principal generals of the allies, and the Dutch deputies. The duke, who was always tender-hearted, wept the old hero's loss, and then, without losing time in useless grief, he exerted himself to provide for his deceased friend's son, the Count Corneille, who was as brave as his father, and who had recently and most nobly distinguished himself under General Webb, in the bloody fight at Wynendale. Old Overkirk had been too much of a soldier, and too little of a man of business, to have saved money; his heart had been thoroughly in the service, and he had forgotten himself in his constant care of his troops, who loved him as a father. It is the fate of such men to die poor. The day after the mournful event, the duke wrote to the prime minister:—"Poor M. Overkirk died yesterday, by which her Majesty will save the pension I am told she gave to Lord Grantham. It would be an act of goodness and generosity if the queen would be pleased to give some part of it to Count Corneille, *who is as virtuous and as brave a man as lives*. His father has been able, I fear, to leave him *nothing*. If I were not sure that the

count did deserve it, and would be grateful to the Queen, I would not say so much for him." *

The disfavour of the duchess with the Queen was greater than ever, and the anti-Marlborough faction at court more violent than ever; but Godolphin was still premier, and so earnest, so warm, and at the same time so reasonable a request could not be refused. Brave old Overkirk's brave son obtained a pension from the British Government.

Making one effort more, striking one more blow in succour of the hard-pressed Boufflers, Vendôme made a stealthy attack on Leffinghen, where 1,200 Dutch and English infantry had been left to assist in protecting our convoys from Ostend. It was a dark night, and dreary and cold, among these canals, swamps, and inundations: the darkness favoured the approaches of the French, and the cold and the dreariness had driven the Dutch and the English to unusually long potations of Dutch gin; the post was surprised, most of its intoxicated occupants were made prisoners, a considerable sum of money, 1,200 barrels of powder, and other ammunition, fell into the hands of the foe. It was a pretty *coup-de-main*; but too late to be of any use to Boufflers. That marshal beat a parley on the 22nd of October (after having sustained a siege of sixty days, of which thirty were with open trenches), and offered to capitulate for the town, though not for the fortress within it.

Hostages were immediately exchanged, and conferences held. Prince Eugene treated the garrison with the generosity to which their bravery entitled them; he paid flattering compliments to the heroic and skilful governor. "Marshal Boufflers," said he, "can demand nothing that he should not ask, or that I should not grant;" and he signed

* Archdeacon Coxe; see also General Sir George Murray's Marlborough Despatches. To the Earl of Sunderland the duke wrote briefly: "M. Anverquerque died here yesterday, and is very much lamented, as well in the army as by all who knew him."—*Despatches*.

the articles of capitulation without reading them through. On the 23rd, the gates of the town surrendered to the allies, and the remainder of the garrison, about 5,000 men, retired into the citadel, where they prolonged their defence more than forty days.*

Before the citadel fell, Marlborough resumed his plan of carrying the war into the heart of France. He had made up his mind to a winter campaign, and saw that either he or his colleague, Eugene, must keep the field, whether the advance were made into France or not. He pressed the lord treasurer to obtain a powerful reinforcement in England, he explained his views to Sir Richard Temple, who went over with the intelligence of the fall of the town of Lille, and he enforced his arguments for an advance in many letters, repeating, that there was no army in France that could withstand him, and that a blow struck in the interior of that country must terminate the war upon such terms as the allies might be pleased to grant to Louis XIV. But, again, the home government were incapable of the great exertion demanded of them, and the Dutch deputies and the States again opposed the whole project. Not being able to do more, he continued to scour Artois and the neighbouring country, levying supplies, and making the French people feel some of the evils and horrors of war, which they had so long been in the habit of carrying among other nations. Formidable corps were established at La Bassée, at Lens, and at other places well within the French frontiers.

As a diversion, Vendôme detached the elector of Bavaria, who had recently returned from the Rhine, with 15,000 men, against Brussels, he (Vendôme) remaining the while

* Very full details of the remarkable siege of Lille will be found in the works of General Sir George Murray and Archdeacon Coxe. Lamberti's *Journal of the Siege*, the *Memoirs of the Duke of Berwick*, the *French Life of the Prince Eugene*, Burnet's *History*, and other works, afford further particulars.

within his entrenched camp on the Scheldt, to block up the road from Lille to Brussels. Happily, the governor of the menaced city had 7,000 men with him, and was himself a man of fidelity and courage: when summoned by the French to surrender, he boldly bade them defiance, and then prepared for a defence with the certainty that the great English commander would very soon do something to relieve him.

Marlborough, as the best means of succouring Brussels, instantly resolved to force the enemy in their strong positions behind the Scheldt. In order to lull his antagonists into security, he, as on other occasions, pretended to be busied on a totally different design. Reports were ingeniously spread, that the mass of the allied troops were being distributed into cantonments until the siege of the citadel of Lille should be finished; and that then an attempt would be made to effect a passage over the canal of Bruges, at some point below Ghent; and to give force to these rumours orders were issued for conveying forage to Menin and Courtray, the field-artillery was sent towards Menin, and staff-officers were employed in selecting quarters at Courtray for the commander-in-chief, and cantonments in the vicinity of that town for the troops. So completely were appearances preserved, that the French expected no present attack anywhere, and both officers and men of the allies fully expected a temporary repose from their hard labours. Still farther to keep up the illusion, the duke, with unusual noise and bustle, proceeded in the midst of his numerous staff towards Courtray. But then, suddenly wheeling round, he advanced with the mass of his forces towards the Scheldt, where the passage of that river was easiest, and directed them against that part of the French lines which he knew to be weakest. His people now discovered his real intentions, and expected a most desperate battle. But the river was traversed without loss or difficulty, and Marlborough gained his great object, the relief of Brussels,

by his stratagetical skill, and without the necessity of fighting any battle at all. The French lines were broken through and through where he wished to break them, and their strong corps stationed at Oudenarde were attacked, beaten, and driven back on Grammont, with the loss of 1,200 men. Thus the road to Brussels was left open to the allies, and Vendôme pushed into a corner. Prince Eugene, who had accompanied the army thus far, now returned to Lille to finish the siege of the citadel, and Marlborough proceeded on to Brussels. The unfortunate Elector of Bavaria broke up his siege and fled, leaving his guns and his wounded behind him; and on that day, the 29th of November, the duke entered the city of Brussels in triumph, having displayed in these rapid operations, at the close of a very long campaign, as much generalship as ever he had shewn. Being conveyed to the governor's house, he was complimented by the magistrates and the deputies of the States, who gratefully and truly attributed their deliverance to his rapid and skilful march. He was accompanied, on this occasion, by the Elector-King Augustus, who had been personally engaged in many of the operations before Lille.*

During his few hours stay in Brussels, the duke found time to reply to some letters of the lord treasurer's, who was again very eager for his return to England. "You are so pressing," said he, "in your letters, for my return, that I must tell you the truth, and beg that you will not think it vanity, that if I should leave the army, it would not be in anybody's power to keep them in the field; so that you see the necessity of my remaining. The truth is, that I am very ill in my health, so that if we should have very ill weather, it may kill me. But I must venture everything,

* Sir George Murray's Marlborough Despatches. Letters and Despatches given by Coxe. In the fourth volume of Sir George Murray's valuable work, will be found several letters containing Marlborough's own narrative of the relief of Brussels.

rather than quit before we have perfected this campaign. My heart is in England, and nobody has greater desire for the enjoying quietness there than myself; but should I take ease at this time, I should hurt the Queen and my country more than my whole life could repair.”*

On the evening of the day in which he entered Brussels, toiled and weary as he was, he returned to Alost, where his spirits were cheered by good news from Prince Eugene and the besiegers of the citadel of Lille. He continued, however, feverish and very ill, as he had been for several days—among the most active and critical days of his life—during which one of his very great cares had been to conceal his bad health from the army.†

What Boufflers could do as a commandant had been done, and done nobly; what Vendôme had attempted for his relief had signally failed; and neither that marshal nor the Duke of Berwick, neither the Elector of Bavaria nor any one else, could do or attempt more for him and his now forlorn citadel. Marlborough was returning from Alost; the allies had opened all the roads by which they expected supplies, and blocked up every part through which the garrison might hope for succour; the approaches were contracted; one lodgement was made after another; and that stern arbiter, famine, was within the crumbling walls of the fortress. On the 9th of December, Marshal Boufflers capitulated upon the most honourable terms, and the citadel was given up to the allies.

Thus terminated the siege of Lille, one of the most memorable and most bloody that modern Europe has witnessed. The French garrison, which counted 15,000 men when the siege commenced, and which had been, by a very brilliant adventure, reinforced with nearly 2,000 while the siege continued, was reduced, at its termination, to 4,500, for the most part wounded or sickly men. But the loss of the

* Archdeacon Coxe.

† See letters to the Duchess, as given by Archdeacon Coxe.

besiegers was still more awfully great, as nearly 12,000 were killed or wounded, and more than 6,000 died of sickness or were invalided during the autumnal and winter months. "I know my men," said Marlborough; "they will suffer a great deal before they grumble." They had undergone all the losses and sufferings of the siege—the latter frequently including a want of proper provisions and downright hunger—with heroic goodwill and without a murmur. The duke had told them that battles were pleasanter things, and more easy to be won, but that Lille *must* be taken, and so the men determined to take it. Some of the unfortunate storming parties had lost half their number before they had thought of retreat; and the survivors had always been ready, when called upon, to storm again.

The duke was at a distance, making preparations for another important siege; but all kindness and courtesy were shewn by Prince Eugene to Marshal Boufflers, who had lived upon horse-flesh, and had nearly finished his last barrel of powder before surrendering. According to one of the French historians of this war, Prince Eugene and the Prince of Orange went to pay their respects to the marshal, on the evening of the day of the surrender of the citadel, and were by him invited to supper; and, as the first course, a dish of roast horse-flesh was set on the sideboard, to shew the besiegers how the besieged and the marshal himself had been living for some time past; but the unpromising dish being removed, the two princes were regaled with all the luxuries and delicacies that could be purchased in the town.* On the following day, Marshal Boufflers and his staff dined with Prince Eugene, who complimented them on their skilful and gallant defence. "I must congratulate myself," said Eugene, "on having taken Lille; but I should prefer the honour of having defended it as you have done."†

But there was brief time for courtesy and compliments; Marlborough, in the midst of deplorable weather, was

* Histoire de Marlborough.

† Id.

keeping the field beyond the Scheldt, and was waiting for Eugene, in order to commence the siege of Ghent, the loss of which place, by treachery, at the beginning of the active operations of the season, had given him so much uneasiness, while during the campaign it had frequently and seriously interfered with his movements. Calculating that the surrender of Lille would close the campaign, and that the allied commanders would not expose their army, reduced by past exertions, to new hardships and toils in the midst of winter, the French king had ordered his generals to strengthen the garrisons of Ghent and Bruges, and distribute the rest of their troops into winter quarters; and all this had been done, it is said, in opposition to the wishes, and in spite of the remonstrances of Vendôme. Count de la Motte, who had received such severe chastisement at Wynendale, was within the walls of Ghent with thirty battalions and nineteen squadrons — “a force,” says Marlborough, “which in other countries would be thought a good army.”* When, to their amazement, the French court learned that Marlborough was bent on an immediate siege, they sent orders to De la Motte to defend the place to the last extremity; but this was all that they could do, as the distribution of his troops into cantonments, and the position taken up by his indefatigable adversary, put it out of the power of Marshal Vendôme to attempt any blow or movement whatsoever.

On the 16th of December, Eugene passed the Scheldt with his army, and joined his illustrious colleague. The requisite arrangements being settled by a council of war, it was decided that Marlborough should direct the siege, and Eugene head the covering army. In pursuance of this resolution, a detachment was sent, on the 17th, from each army, one to take post at Gamarage, and observe the motions of the enemy beyond the Dender, the other to

* Letter to Lord Godolphin, dated December 17th, as given by Archdeacon Coxe.

Osterzelle, to straiten Ghent, between the Upper and Lower Scheldt. The ensuing day, the troops of Marlborough, making a general movement in four columns, invested the place on all sides. On the evening of the 17th, the inhabitants of Ghent, who had little claims on his forbearance, sent out a deputation to implore the duke not to bombard the town.

There were many difficulties to be surmounted: at first a hard frost prevented the breaking of ground for the batteries, and the opening of trenches; then there followed a sudden thaw, which lasted two or three days, during which the French made use of the advantages of their sluices on the Scheldt and Lys by overflowing the country. Thus new roads were obliged to be made for bringing up the siege artillery. Then there followed a few fine days. Marlborough, writing on Christmas-eve, says, "At this time we have very fair weather, which we make use of for hutting and covering ourselves, so that we may resist ill weather if we must have it; for the soldiers, as well as officers, are convinced of the necessity of having this town." On Christmas-day and the day after, there was so great a fog that the besiegers could not see ten yards before them. This delayed the placing of their batteries until the 27th of December. "This fog," says Marlborough, "and my feet being wet, has given me a great cold and sore throat."*

The French made only one sally from Ghent, and their whole defence appears to have been spiritless. On the 30th of December, when our batteries were in a condition to bombard, Count de la Motte sent out a trumpet to demand an honourable capitulation; and this Marlborough granted, from an anxiety to spare his troops, as the frost was again threatening to set in with great severity. On the 2nd of January, the French garrison evacuated the place with the usual honours of war, and were found to be stronger, by four battalions of infantry, than had been

* Letter to Lord Godolphin, in Coxe.

estimated. On the 3rd, Marlborough wrote to the lord treasurer:—"I was yesterday, from ten in the morning till six at night, seeing the garrison of Ghent and all that belonged to them march by me. It was astonishing to see so great numbers, and of good men to look on, suffer a place of this consequence to be taken, at this season, with so little a loss."*

After seeing the last of De la Motte's troops defile before him, Marlborough supped with Prince Eugene, enjoying the happy termination of their incessant fatigues. In the course of the evening, he visited the town of Ghent *incognito*. On the following morning, he examined the fortifications and trenches, and received the compliments of the magistrates, upon which he inwardly put a proper price, but to which he outwardly returned a bland reply. He was then conducted, through lines of burghers, under arms, to a splendid entertainment in the town-hall. In the evening, the lofty tower of the Hotel de Ville was splendidly illuminated; and, as if to efface the memory of their recent defection, all ranks, by loud acclamations, expressed their great joy at being restored to their lawful Austrian sovereign.

"This campaign," wrote Marlborough, "is now ended to my own heart's desire. As soon as they knew I had possession of the gate of Ghent, the French took the reso-

* The French government had expected a very different result. M. Chamillard, who was acting as Minister-at-War, had written to Count de la Motte, on the 6th of December:—"Although not strong in itself, Ghent can be attacked only by narrow and difficult passages; you have sufficient troops to enable you to sell this conquest at a dear price to the allies, should they persist in their design. You have good officers, capable of seconding you; you have had the misfortune to have commanded at Ostend when the enemy reduced it in a few days, and the misfortune of not having succeeded in the combat at Wynendale;—it is for your interest, in the present occasion, to merit, by your conduct, the rewards of his Majesty to which you have been so long aspiring."—*Histoire de Marlborough*.

lution of abandoning Bruges. I cannot express enough to you the importance of these two towns, for without them I could neither be quiet in our winter quarters, nor open with advantage the next campaign.

“ I shall to-morrow give the necessary orders for separating the army, so that in two days they will be all on their march for their winter quarters. I must go with Prince Eugene for some few days to the Hague, after which I shall take a little care of my health.”* On every occasion, we find the duke postponing all consideration of himself to public business and the care of the health of his troops; and hence, in a great measure, the enthusiastic affection with which he was regarded by the soldiery.

Without losing time, the garrisons of Plassendael and Lef-finghen followed the example of Bruges, and retired into France. Thus the enemy abandoned all the places and advantages which defection and treachery had given them at the opening of the campaign.

Leaving the command of the army to Count Tilly, who had succeeded to the post of the lamented Overkirk, the duke and Eugene went through Brussels to the Hague, where they arrived early in January.

And thus terminated this eventful, extraordinary campaign, which is considered as one of the most scientific that is to be found in the annals of military history. Whatever changes may have taken place in the art of war, it is still a campaign to be diligently studied by every young officer who would make himself an able commander. The merits of Marlborough and his colleague are enhanced by those of their chief opponent: Vendôme was neither a Marsin nor a Villeroi, but a most accomplished soldier, abounding in skill and resources, and not only brave, but firm, steady, patient, and persevering. The Duke of Berwick was also an officer of genius, and endowed with the highest military qualities; but as he disagreed and quar-

* Letter to Lord Godolphin, dated, Ghent, January 3rd.

relled with Vendôme—thus producing a division in council and some contradictions in action—he is scarcely to be included among the grand difficulties with which the allied commanders had to contend. From the commencement to the close of the campaign, Marlborough and Eugene had to war against a force superior in numbers, and in a country where the mass of the population certainly favoured the French; they had to attack (at Oudenarde) an army posted in a formidable position; then they had to besiege a place (Lille) of the first strength and magnitude, at the very moment when they were themselves in a manner invested and besieged by the French army; to open and maintain their communications, in spite of innumerable, and at times (to all common observation) insurmountable obstacles, and finally, after the fall of the fortress of Lille, to undertake in the depth of winter, and with troops almost worn out by fatigue, the siege of Ghent, defended by so vast a garrison. Taking no merit to himself, Marlborough declared, over and over again, that the hand of the Almighty was visible in the whole matter.

The French, with a drooping flag, retired into their own country, having, according to Berwick (whose advice, to his great wrath, had not been followed), committed absurdity upon absurdity in the course of this campaign. The un-nationalised Englishman tells us that the Duke of Marlborough (his maternal uncle), during the siege of Lille, sent him a private letter, signifying that the present occasion was a very favourable one to set on foot a negotiation for peace; and that if the proposals were properly made by France to the field-deputies of Holland, to Prince Eugene, and to himself, he would do all in his power to get them accepted. “Nothing,” says Berwick, “could be more advantageous than this advice of the Duke of Marlborough; it opened to us an honourable way of putting an end to a burdensome war. I mentioned it to the Duke of Burgundy, and to M. de Chamillart, who immediately despatched a courier to

the king to receive his orders with respect to the answer which was to be given. The king sent them to M. de Chamillard, who, through excess of policy, had taken it into his head that this proposal of Marlborough proceeded only from the bad situation the allied army was in. This reasoning, I own, was beyond my penetration; and by the manner in which Marlborough had written to me, I was persuaded that apprehension had no share in the matter, and that he had done it only from a desire of putting an end to a war which all Europe began to be tired of. There was not the least appearance of duplicity in what he wrote; and he addressed himself to me with no other view than that the negotiation might pass through my hands, thinking it might be of use to me. M. de Chamillard dictated to me the answer I was to make; and I thought it such an extraordinary one that I sent it in French, to shew the Duke of Marlborough that it did not come from me: he was, indeed, so much offended at it, that no use could be made of this opening to bring about a peace. I am even convinced that this was the principal cause of the aversion which the Duke of Marlborough shewed ever after for pacific measures." As these circumstances rest upon the single authority of Berwick's memoirs: they have been doubted. It appears, however, that there really was some talk of negotiating; but Lord Hardwicke asserts that the overture came from the Duke of Berwick, through whose hands the French court offered the Duke of Marlborough a large sum if he would procure a peace for them.* During the protracted siege of Lille, both Marlborough and Eugene were involved in considerable difficulties, as Vendôme cut off their communication with Brussels, and for some time kept them short of provisions and ammunition. It is not altogether unreasonable to suppose that, under these circumstances, Marlborough may have proposed or listened to overtures. This was a *ruse de guerre* not uncommon. Besides, as he was

* Note on Burnet.

constantly informed by the duchess of the growing boldness of Harley's intrigues, he may for a moment have felt his presence indispensable at St. James's; or he may even have conceived a disgust at the whole war, and a desire to end it. It is evident, from his correspondence, that he had rather frequently such visitations, and that he would sigh for peace and repose in the groves of Blenheim, though these visions were soon again dissipated by the excitement of the campaign, and the necessity for immediate action.

But they were only violently factious party-men—and as such, utterly regardless of truth—who were at this and at a later period constantly affirming that Marlborough prolonged the war for the great pay and other personal benefits he derived from it. If the capture of Lille, of which he was certain, could have brought the French king to the proper terms, he would gladly have aided in concluding a peace. There was nearly every reason for believing that the loss of that great bulwark would induce Louis XIV. to propose such conditions as the allies might honourably and advantageously accept. But as the event produced no such effect, and as the possession of Lille gave that basis for operations in the interior of France, which Prince Eugene had deemed indispensable, the duke would certainly have advanced towards Paris if he had been permitted so to do. It is not true that Marlborough ever afterwards shewed an aversion to pacific measures; his aversion was only to the pride and obstinacy of the French court, who, in their direst calamities, persisted in demanding terms incompatible with the interest and security of the allies, and, indeed, inconsistent with the liberty and independence of Europe. Had France set proper limits to her ambition, and consented to such a limitation of territory as would have removed the perfectly well-founded (and since then frequently verified) apprehensions of her neighbours, Marlborough would have been the very first to cry for peace. He would have treated, even in the glow of his first glorious

victory at Blenheim ; he would have negotiated, as he stood a conqueror on the field of Ramilies ; he would have sheathed his sword, and have listened to reasonable overtures after his conquest at Oudenarde ; but no such overtures were ever made. His enemies, who made the peace, when they had succeeded in driving him both from the camp, and from the councils, and his sovereign, made the peace without obtaining reasonable conditions after such a war ; and bitterly has Europe since paid for their mean impolicy. Marlborough, no doubt, would have waged war to the end of his days, rather than have accepted articles like those contained in the treaty of Utrecht. But the struggle would not have lasted so long ; if properly supported, he would have dictated the proper conditions of peace at the head of his army in Paris, and France would have been kept within the frontiers assigned to her at the peace of Westphalia, in 1648, when the principle of a balance of power in Europe was first and fully recognised. It cannot be repeated too often, that France, from her position on the continent, from the compactness and evenness of her territories, and from other advantages, must always be more formidable than other countries which far exceed her in extent ; add to this, the intermeddling, restless, martial spirit of its population—in all times, and under all governments—and our wonder must cease at the frequent wars which have originated there, and have devastated Europe since the days of Marlborough. The size of France is still incompatible with any lasting repose among nations ; and this, even when we take into account the stupendous growth and rapid development of the Russian empire, and the progress made in arms by other continental nations. When another general war shall be brought to a conclusion—and, at this moment, who is there among us who can tell how soon that war may begin, or how long it may last—the shears will be applied to the French outskirts, and clippings will be made which ought to have been effected long ago. Repelled from the Alps,

and from every part of the Rhine, which ought to be, in all senses, thoroughly a German river, the most turbulent people in Europe will have less frequent opportunities and diminished means of being mischievous. We would contemplate no breaking up, no partitioning of a great country. To see France too weak, were as great an evil to Europe as to see her too strong. Neither William III. nor his illustrious pupil and follower, the Duke of Marlborough, ever contemplated leaving France in any other position than that of a great and powerful nation. But if the views of these two distinguished statesmen could have been carried out, she certainly would have been confined to her proper limits.

The duke, who had known the sharp pressure of poverty in his early days, was careful of his money, and methodical and economical in his personal expenses; but he was liberal, and even munificent on public occasions, and towards his friends, officers, and soldiers; and was evidently incapable of doing aught that was evil or dishonourable for money, or any kind of gain. In the warmth of his gratitude and admiration, King Charles now again pressed upon his acceptance the government *for life* of the Low Countries, which he had conquered in one campaign; with its magnificent appointment of 60,000*l.* a year; and this offer the duke magnanimously, and, apparently, without regret, declined, knowing that the appointment would displease the Dutch, and create jealousies in England.* Of the pretended patriots, who assailed the fame of the great man while he was living, and calumniated his memory when he was dead, was there ever one whose disinterestedness had stood such a test? That which Marlborough said of Lord Peterborough, might have been applied to the great majority of these oratorical patriots:—"Three or four thousand pounds would at any time have turned them

* See the correspondence on this subject in Archdeacon Coxe's valuable work.

one way or the other." The venality of those public men was as base as it is now proven and notorious.

King Charles's original letter, in French, is at Blenheim. We give the translation of it by Archdeacon Coxe :—

"KING CHARLES to the DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

. "Barcelona, August 8th, 1708.

"MY LORD, DUKE, AND PRINCE,—If your letter, of June 26th, delivered to me by General Stanhope, had not been very agreeable to me, you may believe, my lord, that I was transported with one which I have received from the Duke of Savoy, announcing to me the recent victory at Oudenarde. I want expressions to testify the share I take in this new glory which is added to your skill, merit, and courage. Since all your great actions in this war have had no other object than the recovery of my monarchy, you may judge of my heartfelt gratitude to you for the beneficial efforts to my cause which must result from this glorious victory, not less perhaps than the reduction of my whole monarchy, if you will continue the same vigour in the prosecution of the war one year more.

"Thus, my lord, it seems that to the hand which has secured the liberty of Germany, and the Netherlands, Spain will also owe hers. With this confidence you will find me, my prince, always willing to renew the patent for the government of my Low Countries, which I sent you two years ago, and to extend it for your life. You may depend on the fulfilment of my royal word; and be assured that I will, in conformity with this promise, expedite the despatches, as soon as I am in possession of Madrid. I need not recommend to you the propriety of maintaining this secret, as well from the consideration due to the elector palatine, as from a fear of giving umbrage to the States."

As Marshal the Duke of Vendôme was one of Marl-

borough's most formidable adversaries, and as he does not again appear on the field, a few words concerning him may be here introduced.

Vendôme was certainly an antagonist far more worthy of Marlborough than Villeroi had proved himself. He was grandson of Henry IV. of France, but by an illegitimate descent. Voltaire compared him with the great Henry, the beau-ideal of kings, according to the French people. He was four years younger than Marlborough, having been born in 1654. He was very intrepid, and a great favourite with the army. He had served in the last campaigns of the great Turenne, and since then he had seen much active service in Flanders, Spain, and Italy. His experience was as undoubted as his bravery. In sending him to succeed Villeroi, the French king felt a confidence that he would be fully a match for Marlborough, and this was also Vendôme's own opinion. He was disinterested, but very licentious; generous, arrogant, brave, and quick in action, but careless and self-conceited. Even Voltaire, who admired him, was constrained to allow that he was indolent, negligent of discipline, and a dreadful sloven; as was also his brother the Grand Prieur, who served under him in Italy. Voltaire adds, that these two generals oftentimes lie in bed till four o'clock in the afternoon.

BOOK IV.

IF the year 1709 had been to the allies a year of victories in the Netherlands and the north-west frontier of France, it had not been so signalised on the other stages of this extensive war. Yet, on the whole, the confederates had gained rather than lost ground in the south, while the immense exertions which Louis XIV. had been compelled to make, had exhausted, to a very extensive degree, the treasures and resources of his nation, and were tending rapidly to bring France into that state of collapse, which must have laid her prostrate at the feet of those who had combined and fought so long, in order to moderate her pride, and deprive her of the means of being dangerous and oppressive.

Our fleet, under Admiral Drake, had made an easy conquest of Sardinia, and a combined naval and military force, ably directed by General Stanhope, had obtained possession of Minorea, with its magnificent and convenient harbour, and the very strong fortress of Port Mahon. Gibraltar had been captured at an early period of this War of Succession (in the year 1704), and Port Mahon being added to that stronghold, promised to give us the command of the Mediterranean Sea. On the continent of Spain, Count Staremberg, who had assumed the command which had been offered to Prince Eugene, kept his ground in Catalonia, from which the French had confidently hoped to drive King Charles and the last of the allies in the summer of this year. But as the count's army, even when reinforced by German and Dutch battalions, which Marl-

borough had procured for him, amounted only to 22,000 men, he could do little more than stand on the defensive; and while he occupied his strong well-chosen position at Cervera, he had the mortification almost to witness the fall of Tortosa and Denia, and also the investment of Alicante, the only place which Charles possessed in Spain beyond the Catalonian frontier. Count Staremberg, however, kept in Spain many battalions and squadrons which Louis would otherwise have hurled against Marlborough, or the allied army on the Rhine, under the command of the Elector of Hanover.

On the side of Italy, operations were retarded, and in part rendered of no avail, by quarrelsome jealousies between the court of Vienna and the court of Turin. But for the personal influence, and wise and patient mediation of Marlborough, nothing would have been done in this quarter. General Daun, however, took the field late in the month of July, with an army of Austrians, Piedmontese, and Savoyards, and succeeded, before the season of snow and tempest set in, in capturing the strong fortresses of Exilles and Fenestrelle, thus clearing the passes of the Alps, and opening the road to the invasion of the south of France by Dauphiny. By their conquest of the kingdom of Naples, and by other proceedings in the south of Italy, the Austrians had involved themselves in a feud and quarrel with the court of Rome; and the Pope, Clement XI. as if resolved to use temporal as well as spiritual weapons, excommunicated the Imperialist generals, raised troops, and endeavoured to form a new holy league among the states of Italy, to be supported by Louis XIV. and his grandson, Philip, the French King of Spain, to whose interests Clement had always inclined. Again, the gentle diplomacy of our "incomparable Englishman" was called into action; and we find Marlborough, the one great champion of the Reformed Faith, busily, skilfully, and successfully mediating between the Pope of Rome, and the Roman Catholic

emperor.* A war between the Pontiff and the Kaiser, or the formation of any Italian league, must, at the moment, have been attended with consequences very disastrous to the great European confederacy.

Jealousy and even open ill-will had long prevailed, and were now increasing between the court of St. James and the court of Hanover. Queen Anne regarded with strong feelings of aversion the elector George, who, by the act of settlement made by Parliament, was to be her successor on the throne of England; and the elector George suspected—and not without very strong grounds—that Anne and the violent Tory party, to whom she had before this given her entire confidence, were devising all the means they could to bar him from the legal succession. The elector, moreover, was incensed against Marlborough and Eugene, for their having excluded him from the secret of their great campaign of 1708, and for their having left him with the minor army on the Rhine, thereby, as he conceived, excluding him from the glory and advantages of this most brilliant part of the war. In this humour the elector had grieved, instead of rejoicing, at every success which the two great commanders had achieved, and had done little or nothing to prevent the march, either of the Duke of Berwick from the Moselle, or of any of the French corps which, in the course of the summer and autumn, had been constantly sent down the valley of the Rhine to reinforce the army of Vendôme. To remove this ill-humour was one of Marlborough's arduous tasks; and it was one which demanded all his prudence, circumspection, and wonderful command of temper. To complete his perplexities, and the almost crushing weight of his diplomatic business, the King of Prussia fell into a humour as bad as that of the Elector of Hanover, and this obliged the duke to enter into another long correspondence and to despatch an agent of his own to the court of Berlin,

* The expression "incomparable Englishman" is Southey's; Marlborough most assuredly merited it.

where the common cause was badly served by the British ambassador, the intriguing, false Lord Raby, who had struck up a secret alliance with the new favourite Mrs. Masham, with Harley, St. John, and all the enemies of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough.* Succeeding where any other man must have failed, Marlborough not only conciliated his Prussian Majesty, obtaining from him promises of great exertion for the ensuing campaign, but also made up another violent quarrel which had broken out between the courts of Berlin and Vienna.

While the duke was detained on the continent by a press of business, and then by contrary winds and bad weather, the lord treasurer was driven almost to despair by the intrigues at court, and factions in the council and in parliament. The death of the Prince of Denmark, in the autumn of 1708, had weakened the friends of Godolphin and Marlborough, had increased the boldness of their adversaries, and had led to the disgrace of the duke's brother, Admiral Churchill, who, at last, was dismissed from the Board of Admiralty, in an insulting manner, by the very Whig government which the duke himself had made. The Whigs in office were true neither to their principles nor to one another; their pride, arrogance, and selfishness, and the incurable habit they were in of lecturing the queen, and everybody else, much increased the aversion of her Majesty, who had never borne the party any good-will, gave a handle to the Tories, who were not slow in seizing it, and depopularized them with the nation at large. Bad as most of its elements were, had the cabinet only been united, Godolphin might long have braved the storm; but the cabinet was both disunited and refractory: the premier was denied his proper authority and pre-

* Abundant proofs of Lord Raby's false and ungrateful conduct will be found in Sir George Murray's Marlborough Despatches, etc. His lordship caused the duke much uneasiness and a vast deal of trouble: he was always asking,—importuning for some fresh honour or promotion.

eminence; and, not unfrequently, after his measures had been adopted at the council-table, they were thwarted by his colleagues who were entrusted with their execution. Lord Halifax hated Marlborough, and had no love for Godolphin; Lord Sunderland, though the duke's own son-in-law, was ambitious, proud, and ungrateful; Lord Somers had become petulant in council; and some other members of the cabinet were not to be trusted. Godolphin had been feeling for months that nothing but the presence of Marlborough could have a chance of giving anything like strength and consistency to this dislocated, tottering government. Hence, his frequent and earnest prayers to the duke to leave campaigning and foreign negotiation, and come home to England. On the 10th of January, the premier wrote to the commander-in-chief, in terms which are quite dismal:—"I don't use to trouble you with complaints of my own circumstances; but so much advantage is taken of your absence, and I suffer so much, that I must give myself the vent of saying, *the life of a slave in the galleys is paradise in comparison of mine*; but at first, the length of the campaign would not let you come, afterwards the States would not let you come, and now, God Almighty won't let you: so I must yield to fate."*

But when the winds were favourable, Marlborough could not quit the Hague, being compelled to remain there in order to have an eye on certain new negotiations for peace, which had been again opened by the French with the Dutch. Thus he did not reach London until the 12th of March 1709, having run a narrow chance of perishing at sea, the voyage having been both dangerous and tedious.

On the day after his arrival, the duke appeared in the House of Lords, and was welcomed with warm congratulations. The chancellor, having expressed the thanks of the house for his great and eminent services, said in conclusion, "I shall not be thought to exceed my present com-

* Letter to Lord Godolphin, as given by Archdeacon Coxe.

mission, if, being thus led to contemplate the mighty things your grace has done for us, I cannot but conclude with acknowledging, with all gratitude, the providence of God in raising you up to be an instrument of so much good, in so critical a juncture, when it was so much wanted." The duke replied with his usual gentleness and modesty. Both houses of parliament presented addresses to the throne, expressing a hope of peace, but suggesting no dangerous or dishonourable concession to the French king.

During his very short stay in England, Marlborough had the mortification to experience the same coldness which the queen had previously manifested to the lord treasurer, and to find that her Majesty's aversion to the entire body of Whigs had increased rather than diminished. He was also painfully affected at seeing that he, as well as Godolphin, was still the object of jealousy to the Whigs, and that a cordial union with them, on which the safety of the government and the proper conduct of war or negotiation must depend, was of difficult and doubtful accomplishment. The sharp stings of ingratitude, and the painful exhibition of baseness in old friends, and on the part of the great and high-born, were not wanting to complete his dissatisfaction and unhappiness. His wife, the duchess, being now admitted only to short, formal, and ceremonious interviews with the queen, was deserted and shunned by the herd of courtiers and self-seekers, who for so many years had paid her homage, and been at her feet. On the other hand, the apartments of Mrs. Masham, the new favourite, were constantly thronged by persons of all ranks and conditions, and mostly by those of *very* high rank; great lords and ladies, generals and admirals; men from the benches of parliament, and others from the bench of bishops—individuals who had rank and name, but who wanted money, and others who abounded in money, but who wanted rank and title.

Whatever were the faults (towards the queen) of the duchess, she was a woman of vast ability, magnanimous,

noble-hearted, and worthy of being the wife of Marlborough, whose unvarying affection for her fell little short of idolatry. She had, indeed, the mind of a queen. The mind of her ungrateful supplanter, whom she had rescued from penury, was the mind of a lady's-maid, or chamberwoman. The duchess had been about the person of the queen ever since her childhood; her Majesty had never seen Mrs. Masham until presented and most warmly recommended by the duchess; this was some time after Anne's marriage with the Prince of Denmark. For years, the new favourite had remained about the palace, in an inferior station, for which only nature and education had fitted her, and was no more noticed than any other waiting woman. The affection of the queen for the fair and spirited wife of her great soldier and statesman, had continued to grow warmer and warmer. When separated, though only by the shortest distance, and for a day or two, they exchanged letters. In this curious correspondence, of which many specimens have been published by Archdeacon Coxe, and by the duchess herself, the queen took the humble name of Mrs. Morley, the duchess the name of Mrs. Freeman. The *aliases* were chosen by Anne herself. The duchess says, she took the name of Freeman as consonant with her character and natural disposition. Mrs. Morley could not live without her dear Mrs. Freeman! poor Mrs. Morley would die if ever dear Mrs. Freeman thought seriously of leaving her! These, and expressions still more romantic and passionate, abound in her Majesty's letters. The chamberwoman was first cousin to the duchess, and stood nearly in the same relationship to the false and intriguing Harley, who, with St. John, was the duke's most dangerous enemy. We have her grace's own account of the advancement of this commonplace woman, and though written with a heat almost excusable under the circumstances, it is well known to be substantially true and correct.

“ The story of this lady, as well as of *that gentleman* who

was her great adviser and director, is worth the knowledge of posterity, as it will lead them into a sense of the instability of court favour, and of the incurable baseness which some minds are capable of contracting. Mrs. Masham was the daughter of one Hill, a merchant in the city, by a sister of my father. Our grandfather, Sir John Jenyns, had two-and-twenty children, by which means the estate of the family (which was reputed to be about 4,000*l.* a year) came to be divided into small parcels. Mrs. Hill had only 500*l.* to her portion. Her husband lived very well, as I have been told, for many years, till, turning projector, he brought ruin upon himself and his family. But as this was long before I was born, I never knew there were such people in the world, till after the Princess Anne was married, and when she lived at the Cock-pit; at which time an acquaintance of mine came to me and said, 'she believed I did not know that I had relations who were in want,' and she gave me an account of them. When she had finished her story, I answered, that indeed I had never heard before of any such relations, and immediately gave her out of my purse ten guineas for their present relief, saying, I would do what I could for them. Afterwards, I sent Mrs. Hill more money, and saw her. She told me that her husband was in the same relation to Mr. Harley as she was to me, but that he had never done anything for her. I think Mrs. Masham's father and mother did not live long after this. They left four children, two sons and two daughters. The elder daughter (afterwards Mrs. Masham) was a grown woman. I took her to St. Albans, where she lived with me and my children, and I treated her with as great kindness as if she had been my sister. After some time, a bedchamber-woman of the Princess of Denmark's died; and as in that reign (after the princesses were grown up) rockers, though not gentlewomen, had been advanced to be bedchamber-women, I thought I might ask the princess to give the vacant place to Mrs. Hill. At first, indeed, I had some scruple about it;

but this being removed by persons I thought wiser, with whom I consulted, I made the request to the princess, and it was granted. As for the younger daughter (who is still living), I engaged my Lord Marlborough, when the Duke of Gloucester's family was settled, to make her laundress to him, which was a good provision for her. And when the Duke of Gloucester died, I obtained for her a pension of 200*l.* a year, which I paid out of the privy purse. And in some time after, I asked the queen's leave to buy her an annuity out of some of the funds, representing to her Majesty, that as the privy-purse money produced no interest, it would be the same thing to her, if, instead of the pension to Mrs. Hill, she gave her at once a sum sufficient to purchase an annuity, and that by this means her Majesty would make a certain provision for one who had served the Duke of Gloucester. The queen was pleased to allow the money for that purchase, and it is very probable that Mrs. Hill has the annuity to this day, and perhaps nothing else, unless she saved money after her sister had made her deputy to the privy purse, which she did, as soon as she had supplanted me. The elder son was, at my request, put by my Lord Godolphin into a place in the custom-house; and when, in order to his advancement to a better, it was necessary to give security for his good behaviour, I got a relation of the Duke of Marlborough to be bound for him in 2,000*l.* His brother (whom the bottlemen afterwards called 'Honest Jack Hill') was a tall boy, whom I clothed (for he was all in rags), and put to school at St. Alban's, to one Mr. James, who had been an usher under Dr. Busby of Westminster. And whenever I went to St. Albans I sent for him, and was as kind to him as if he had been my own child. After he had learned what he could there, a vacancy happening of page of honour to the Prince of Denmark, his highness was pleased, at my request, to take him. I afterwards got my Lord Marlborough to make him groom of the bedchamber to the Duke of Gloucester. And though my lord always

said, that *Jack Hill was good for nothing*, yet, to oblige me, he made him his aide-de-camp, and afterwards gave him a regiment. But it was his sister's interest that raised him to be a general, and to command in that ever-memorable expedition to Quebec: I had no share in doing him these honours. To finish what I have to say upon this subject: when Mr. Harley thought it useful to attack the Duke of Marlborough in parliament, this Quebec general,* this *honest Jack Hill*, this *once ragged boy whom I clothed*, happening to be sick in bed, was, nevertheless, persuaded by his sister to get up, wrap himself in warmer clothes than those I had given him, and go to the House to vote against the duke. I may here add, that even the husband of Mrs. Masham had several obligations to me. It was at my instance that he was first made a page, then a querry, and afterwards groom of the bedchamber to the prince; for all which he himself thanked me, as for favours procured by my means. As for Mrs. Masham herself, I had so much kindness for her, and had done so much to oblige her, without having ever done anything to offend her, that it was too long before I could bring myself to think her other than a true friend, or forbear rejoicing at any instance of favour shewn her by the queen. I observed, indeed, at length, that she was grown more shy of coming to me, and more reserved than usual when she was with me; but I imputed this to her peculiar moroseness of temper, and for some time made no other reflections upon it.

“The first thing which led me into inquiries about her conduct, was, the being told (in the summer of 1707), that my cousin Hill was privately married to Mr. Masham. I went to her and asked her if it were true; she owned it was, and begged my pardon for having concealed it from me. As much reason as I had to take ill this reserve

* To please Mrs. Masham, the Tory ministry, which succeeded Godolphin's, gave this John Hill the command of an expedition to Canada. We need scarcely add that honest Jack made a sad mess of it.

in her behaviour, I was willing to impute it to bashfulness and want of breeding, rather than to anything worse. I embraced her with my usual tenderness, and very heartily wished her joy; and then, turning the discourse, entered into her concerns in as friendly a manner as possible, contriving how to accommodate her with lodgings, by removing her sister into some of my own. I then inquired of her very kindly, whether the Queen knew of her marriage; and very innocently offered her my service, if she needed it, to make that matter easy. She had by this time learned the art of dissimulation pretty well, and answered with an air of unconcernedness, that the *bedchamber-woman had already acquainted the Queen with it*; hoping by this answer to divert any farther examination into the matter. But I went presently to the Queen and asked her, *why she had not been so kind as to tell me of my cousin's marriage*, expostulating with her upon the point, and putting her in mind of what she used often to say to me out of "Montaigne,"—*that it was no breach of promise of secrecy to tell such a friend anything, because it was no more than telling it to oneself*. All the answer I could obtain from her Majesty was this,—*I have a hundred times bid Masham tell it you, and she would not*.

"The conduct both of the Queen and Mrs. Masham convinced me that there was some mystery in the affair, and thereupon I set myself to inquire as particularly as I could into it. And in less than a week's time I discovered, *that my cousin was become an absolute favourite; that the Queen herself was present at her marriage in Dr. Arbuthnot's lodgings, at which time her Majesty had called for a round sum out of the privy purse; that Mrs. Masham came often to the Queen when the prince was asleep, and was generally two hours every day in private with her*. And I likewise then discovered, beyond all dispute, Mr. Harley's *correspondence and interest at court by means of this woman*.

"I was struck with astonishment at such an instance of

ingratitude, and should not have *believed*, if there had been any room left for *doubting*.

"My lord Marlborough was at first no less incredulous than I."*

Harley had, indeed, neglected his poor forlorn cousin Abigail, and had done nothing to relieve the distresses of her family; but so soon as he saw that cousin Abigail, as Mrs. Masham, and bedchamber-woman to the Queen, could be serviceable to his views, he acknowledged the relationship, and made her the medium of his secret intercourse and influence in the palace. And this piece of mediocrity, or less, this one waiting-woman, did, indeed, for Louis XIV., as Southey has said, what all his generals and armies, all his power, and all his policy could not have done; by her means, the councils of Godolphin and the victories of Marlborough were frustrated, and France, at a moment when she must otherwise have received the law of peace from England, was enabled to dictate it to Europe. It is painful to dwell upon these humiliating intrigues, which deranged the policy of the greatest of living statesmen, and threw a dark shade over the glories of such victories as Blenheim, Ramilies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet, but the subject cannot properly be understood without such details.

"History," says Southey, in one of his admirably clear

* An Account of the Conduct of the Dowager-Duchess of Marlborough, etc. London, 1742. This "Letter to my Lord —," as it is called, fills an octavo volume of 316 pages. In its composition, her Grace was assisted by Hooke, author of the Roman History, and other works. It provoked *many* replies; the most conspicuous of which, entitled, "The Other Side of the Question, London, 1742," though it bears on the title-page "by a Woman of Quality," was written by Ralph, who figures in the Dunciad, but who, nevertheless, was a respectable historian and writer of political subjects. In the course of this same year of controversy (1742), an anonymous friend of the duchess published a rejoinder, entitled "A Full Vindication," etc.

and condensed passages, "cannot be perused without some feeling of humiliation for our country and our kind, when it cannot be understood without developing such pitiful intrigues as these. The violence of Sunderland, Halifax, and Somers, and the extreme imprudence with which the duchess espoused their cause, assailing her royal mistress with perpetual solicitations, and wearying, and even worrying her with reproaches for her diminished friendship and alienated confidence, disposed Anne to commit herself to the guidance of the bedchamber-woman, who possessed just talent enough to direct her inclinations by always appearing to assent to them, and of Harley, who flattered her weaknesses, strengthened all her prejudices, confirmed her in her antipathies, and succeeded in making her as complete a dissembler as himself. The cause of her pertinacious resistance to every promotion which could strengthen the Whigs, or satisfy them, and this not only to the rash solicitations of the duchess, but to Godolphin and Marlborough when they represented the impossibility of carrying on the public business against open enemies and discontented friends, was explained, when it was ascertained that Harley held midnight conferences with her, to which he was admitted by Mrs. Masham's means. But when Marlborough, whose letters to the Queen breathed always the genuine spirit of respectful and affectionate loyalty, hinted at those secret counsels by which her Majesty was estranged from her old, tried servants, the Queen denied the existence of any such counsels with such protestations of sincerity, and such solemnity of falsehood, as must stamp her memory with disgrace. Harley, indeed, to whose tuition she had committed herself, was a man of matchless insincerity. Even Dr. Somerville, the ablest apologist of the Tories of that reign, declares, with an honourable feeling of an historian's highest duties, that the part which Harley acted, 'exhibits a scene of dissimulation and duplicity, for which neither his sympathy with the sovereign, nor the unjusti-

fiable conduct of the junta to her, nor the goodness of the end which he had in view, supposing that to be admitted, can afford any apology.'""*

In many, though not in all respects, Harley's coadjutor, St. John (Bolingbroke), bears a pretty close resemblance to the model conspirator of ancient Rome:—" *Animus audax, subdolus, varius, cujuslibet rei simulator ac dissimulator, alieni appetens, sui profusus, ardens in cupiditatibus; satis eloquentiæ, sapientiæ parum.*"†

For a long time, while Harley was serving under them, and betraying them, Marlborough and Godolphin would not believe the treachery of a man to whom they had given their entire confidence, and on whom they had conferred every possible favour. We have shewn, in the preceding book, that when they were convinced of his perfidy they had the greatest difficulty in obtaining his dismissal; and that, after he was expelled from the council, Harley became more intrinsic with the Queen, and more dangerous than ever. From the day of that scene in the council-chamber, when Anne betrayed such violent emotion, we may pretty safely date her hatred to Marlborough himself. This feeling, though it did not originate in that circumstance, which, on the contrary, had for many years secured to him the affection of Anne, was now doubtlessly exaggerated and embittered on account of Marlborough's being husband to the duchess.‡ At court, no opportunity of annoying the commander-in-chief, or of disappointing and dis-

* Quarterly Review, vol. xxiii. ; article on Archdeacon Coxe's Memoirs of the Duke.

† Sallust Bellum Catilinarium: "His mind was daring, crafty, versatile, capable of profound simulation and dissimulation, greedy of what was not his own, and lavish of what was, eager in his desires: eloquence enough he had, but little wisdom."

‡ See Remarks upon the Account of the Conduct of a certain Duchess, in a Letter from a Member of the last Parliament in the reign of Queen Anne, addressed to a young nobleman. London, 1742.

couraging his friends, was now let slip. Officers who had never done anything but dangle about the palace and dance attendance on Mrs. Masham, were promoted over the heads of brave veterans who had followed Marlborough in all his campaigns since 1702. When the Earl of Essex died, the Queen wrote to the duke desiring him to give the earl's regiment to Abigail's brother, Mr. Hill—that *honest* Jack Hill who had been so basely ungrateful. The secrecy of the post-office was tampered with to an extent not before known; the letters which the duke's friends wrote from the continent, were stopped, opened, and sometimes copied; to save their correspondence from these revolting processes, they were obliged to send their letters by private confidential hands, or to write them in cypher.*

The Court, the Tories, and no small portion of the Whigs, were as anxious to get the duke out of England as Godolphin had been to get him into it. The negotiations between the French and the Dutch were still in progress at the Hague, and demanded Marlborough's presence, and (what he could not give) his undivided attention. He accordingly took his departure from London in less than a month after his return to it; and, on the 9th of April, joined his fast, unchangeable friend, Prince Eugene. Finding that he could not reconcile the jarring pretensions even of our own allies, and that he needed new instructions from the cabinet, he came again over to England towards the end of April.

During his new visit to England, the subject of a general peace was amply discussed in the cabinet; and at his own instance, Lord Townshend was associated with him in the office of plenipotentiary. On the 18th of May, the duke, with Lord Townshend in company, arrived once more at the Hague. He there found, that negotiations had assumed a somewhat more favourable form, and that

* Dr. Hare, the duke's chaplain, is constantly complaining of these practices.

there was now a prospect of such a peace as his heart yearned for. But he was hampered with new instructions, and unwise conditions; he was no longer the sole negotiator for England: he found that Lord Townshend took the lead of him, and even signed papers of which he disapproved.* The despatches and letters of Godolphin and Marlborough, as published by Archdeacon Coxe and Sir George Murray, strongly prove that the duke was most sincerely anxious for peace, and that he was overruled by the decisions of the cabinet. "Had he," says Coxe, "indeed, possessed the sole management of affairs in peace and war, he would, doubtless, have framed such conditions as would have been accepted, or would have made such mighty preparations as would have enabled him to dictate his own terms in the heart of France. In this case, the treaty of Utrecht would not have stained the annals of this deluded and devoted country."

M. de Torcy, the plenipotentiary of Louis XIV. at the Hague—like all other ministers and diplomatists who had come in contact with him—was charmed with the manners and bearing of the duke. In this respect, as in his straightforward way of negotiating, Wellington, and only he, can be a perfect parallel to Marlborough.

Diplomacy is not generally considered favourable to the strictest veracity, and the Frenchman was writing to an old king, whose vanity and irritability he was bound to soothe and flatter; in this way de Torcy said some things which are proved to have been untrue; but the following words appear to have been written to Louis XIV. in sincerity of heart:—

"Politeness characterized everything the duke said. He omitted no opportunity of speaking of his respect to your Majesty's person. It was in France, and under Turenne,

* Dean Swift's *Conduct of the Allies*, etc. M. de Torcy's *Memoires pour Servir à l'Histoire des Negotiations depuis le Traité de Riswick jusqu'à la Paix d'Utrecht*.

he said, that he had learned the art of war; he would never forget it He spoke of the marvels of Providence, to which he ascribed all the events of the war He frequently said, that it was to the hand of the Almighty that we ought to ascribe the concord of the eight nations which compose the alliance, all of which have thought and acted as one man; and it must really be admitted, that this is a prodigy unexampled in the history of leagues." *

As the French king had long been convinced that the alliance would fall to pieces, if he could only deprive it of the military skill and consummate prudence of the English general, De Torcy was instructed to offer the duke two millions—three millions—four millions of livres, for certain compliances. "Among the many slanders," says Southey, "with which the memory of Marlborough has been assailed, he has been reproached for his conduct on this occasion as only not having accepted the bribe. Never was any reproach more unjust. No other statement of the fact exists than what De Torcy himself has given, and from that it appears, that Marlborough's conduct was exactly what might have been expected from him, dignified and prudent. He returned no answer to the proposal; changed the conversation instantly whenever it was resumed; and by the manner in which he adhered to his instructions, proved to De Torcy that it was as impossible to prevail over him by such means, as to beat him in the field. In making the offers of money, De Torcy only obeyed the orders of his sovereign, whose gold had formerly been graciously received in England, both by the prince on the throne and the patriots in opposition; † and the English government, through the agency of

* *Memoires de M. de Torcy.* This is one of the *many* works which ought to be read through, in order to have a proper understanding of these negotiations at the Hague; but it must not be read by itself alone.

† The prince on the throne was Charles II. so long the pensionary of France: our patriots in opposition were,—Algernon Sidney, Sir Thomas Lyttleton, Mr. Hampden (the grandson of the great patriot),

Marlborough himself, had been accustomed to employ the same golden arguments with the ministers of the allied powers.* The offer, therefore, was not then, as it would be in these days, an insult. De Torcy acted conformably to the times when he made it, and Marlborough conformably to himself when he received it with silent disdain, and pursued the business of their meeting with an unaltered temper.”†

It is stated, on the authority of some private manuscript letters and the conversation of a talkative Frenchman, that Harley had his spies upon the duke at this time; and that the offer of the great bribe was discovered, and quickly communicated, through Mrs. Masham, to the Queen.‡ But the authority for the facts is worthless. Nor was there any need of Harley’s spies for making such a discovery, as the duke himself made no secret of the matter.

De Torcy, upon the rejection of the millions of livres, intimated to the duke that he was in the secret of his intrigues, in former years, with the exiled Stuarts and the Court of St. Germain, and that a disclosure of his letters might put him in peril in England: and here, the Frenchman says, that Marlborough blushed deeply, but still refused to be influenced by Louis. Here it was De Torcy himself who had nothing new to reveal, that *old* correspondence, in which so many had taken part, being well known in England. Nor could Marlborough have had anything to fear, either from De Torcy’s revelation or from any

Mr. Powle, Mr. Harley, Sir Thomas Armstrong, Sir John Baber, the famous leader of the dissenting party, with others of equal name and note.

* We have shewn what the duke did in the camp of Charles XII.; but, when they were not to be won by other means, Marlborough, by order of his government, had given money to the ministers of nearly every court in Europe.

† Quarterly Review, vol. xxiii.; article on Archdeacon Coxe’s Life.

‡ Hamilton’s Transactions.

proceedings against him on the old facts, as he and all the others who had corresponded with the exiles were covered by an act of grace and bill of indemnity, which had been duly passed through parliament in the spring of this very year.

The allies had committed the mistake of asking too much, when all that was really desirable might have been obtained from impoverished and starving France. By prolonging the negotiations, De Torey gained time—an invaluable benefit to his master. At last, pretending that Louis would make a virtue of necessity, and submit to the hard conditions in order to prevent farther poverty, misery, and bloodshed, he set off for Paris with the preliminaries in his portfolio, leaving a chargé d'affaires behind him at the Hague. He had kept off hostilities till the 1st of June, and he hoped, at least, to gain a week or two more. At Douay, he met Marshal Villars, who had now succeeded Vendôme, as Vendôme had succeeded Villeroy, shewed him the articles, and advised him to put his army in fighting order. Villars expressed his confidence in the bravery of his troops, but told the minister that, in the course of a month, the men would be without bread, and obliged to trust to Providence for their subsistence. When De Torey reached Paris, the chargé d'affaires he had left at the Hague was recalled; and a day or two after, Prince Eugene was informed that his most Christian Majesty could never accept the terms set down in the preliminaries. The confederates, on their part, declared that unless he accepted the articles as now proposed by the 15th of June, they would never again offer him such good terms.

It was thus, after all, the French, and not the allies, who broke off negotiations.

“The treaty broke off because the allies required that the whole Spanish monarchy should be given up by Philip within two months, and that if he refused to do this, Louis should assist the allies *in compelling him to submit* to the

terms of peace. Both in France and Spain a proper advantage was made of this demand, which was as impolitic as it was in every way indefensible. But wherever it originated, whether with the counsellors of the Archduke Charles, whom it most concerned, and who were unwise enough, and ungenerous enough for anything, or with the Whigs in England, who had not the grace of bearing their faculties meekly, certain it is that Marlborough disapproved it, and expressed his decided opinion that there was neither necessity nor utility in making such demands. He says, in a confidential letter to Godolphin, ‘I have as much mistrust for the sincerity of France as anybody living can have : but I shall own to you that, in my opinion, if France had delivered the towns promised by the preliminaries, and demolished Dunkirk and the other towns mentioned, they must have been at our discretion, so that if they had played tricks, so much the worse for themselves.’”* No man rejoiced more in the prospect of peace. During the whole war, peace and retirement had been the second wish of his heart—the first was to ensure the safety of his country by curbing the power of France. At this time, he expected peace so fully, that he had commenced arrangements for paying and dismissing the foreign troops, and for the return of the army to England. But he did not cease to represent to the cabinet, that the sure and only means of obtaining the terms which they were resolved to dictate, were to provide a superior force in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, his colleagues possessed neither the same moderation nor the same foresight.† Contrary to Marlborough’s opinion, they insisted upon terms which could not be accepted by the French court without a terrible sacrifice of honour and feeling, and they relied so fully upon obtaining their utmost

* Coxe. For many interesting papers on these negotiations at the Hague, from the duke’s own pen, see Sir G. Murray’s Marlborough Despatches, vol. iv.

† Southey, in Quarterly Review.

demands, that they increased Marlborough's forces, in order to ensure full success.

By the advice of De Torcy, Louis condescended to write circular letters to the local authorities throughout all the provinces of France, declaring that he had tried all methods in order to restore peace, that he had spared himself no sacrifice, but that he had been opposed and disappointed by the insatiableness of his enemies—by men who delighted in war for the sake of their own private interests. "If," said the royal apologist, "I granted all they asked, it would be to the ruin and perpetual infamy of the French nation and name." He also declared, in his council, that if he must make war, he would rather make it upon the enemies of France than against his own family; that it was a monstrous proposition that he should be called upon to send armies across the Pyrenees, to drive his own grandson Philip from the throne which he had secured to himself in Spain. This susceptible people were warmed and excited, and, half-starving as they were, they applauded the patriotism and family affections of their aged king, and exerted themselves to the utmost to support him. In a more private and less oratorical manner, Louis said that hunger would recruit his armies; that the poor people would be glad to follow his bread-wagons.

As Marlborough and Eugene had torn the laurels from the confident brows of so many of their best generals, the French court had been at a loss whom to send next. "Send Marshal Villars," said the old king, "for Villars has never been beaten." The assertion was not quite true, but the commander thus designated had usually been enterprising and fortunate. Voltaire characterised Villars as being lucky, braggart, and brave. He was born in 1653, and was in the full vigour of matured manhood, and considered the best living general in France, when he came to contend with Marlborough and Eugene. At an early period, he had attracted the notice of Louis XIV. by his

great activity and gallantry in action. He had served under Condé, Luxembourg, and de Crequi, and had fought in Flanders, Germany, Hungary (against the Turks), in Italy, and in the Cevennes. He was also an experienced diplomatist, having spent several years of his life as an ambassador in Bavaria and Austria. We shall soon see that in this war he was not destined to be more fortunate than any of his predecessors.

With 112,000 men he occupied a remarkable position, strong by nature, and additionally strengthened by art; it extended from Douay to the Lys, its right resting on the canal of Douay, the centre being covered by the village of La Bassée, the left supported by Bethune and its extensive marshes. The whole line was traversed by a ditch fifteen feet wide; and behind the ditch were bastions in some places, and partial inundations in others.

Prince Eugene declared that the only proper place to negotiate with the French was a field of battle; and by the 21st of June, he and Marlborough took the field. Completely deceiving the enemy as to their intentions, they crossed the frontiers of France, and after various movements, which still more perplexed the French, they drew up in a large plain not far from Lille. They gave out that they were determined upon an immediate battle, let the ground be what it would; and in expectation of this event, the French called into camp one-half of the garrison of Tournay. Villars' well-entrenched camp was not to be attacked lightly.* The confederates, not daring either to attack him there, or to march upon Paris, and leave him where he was, struck off by night, on the 27th of June, for Tournay, a strong place, but insufficiently garrisoned. Villars vainly attempted to throw into it a reinforcement of 7,000 men: the besiegers broke ground before

* It appears, however, in a letter to the duchess, that Marlborough would have fallen upon Villars in his strong camp, if he had not been dissuaded by Prince Eugene.

it on the 7th of July; but Tournay did not surrender to Prince Eugene till the 30th, and then it was only the town that capitulated, the citadel not being taken until the 3rd of September. On the same day, leaving a force under the Earl of Albemarle to level the works, Marlborough and Eugene marched into Hainault to lay siege to Mons. Villars, having quitted his entrenched camp, manœuvred with the view of guarding the approaches to Mons, and cutting off the confederates' van, which was commanded by the Prince of Hesse. Marshal Boufflers, who had so nobly distinguished himself at the siege of Lille and on other occasions, joined him at this critical moment, and shared the command with him. On the 9th of September, the outposts of the two armies were slightly engaged; but the French fell back to an encampment near the town of Malplaquet, and passed the night in fortifying their front. Marlborough and Eugene were waiting for their rear-guard; and during the two following days the hostile forces stood opposite to each other, the French still strengthening their positions. On the evening of the 10th, when the forces they expected had come up, Marlborough and Eugene, in spite of the objections of the Dutch field-deputies, who represented that it would be a hopeless attempt to force Villars and Boufflers in their camp, resolved to give battle on the morrow. And accordingly, on the 12th of September, they fought and won the battle of Malplaquet, a battle more terrible than either Blenheim or Oudenarde.

As the morning of the eventful 11th of September began to dawn, a thick mist overspread the country, and concealed the two armies from each other. In the camp of the allies, divine service was solemnly performed at three in the morning, with the usual marks of devotion, the soldiers having benefited by the example of Marlborough; silence and order reigned through all the ranks, as they steadily marched, under cover of the fog, from their cold bivouac

to their appointed posts, which had been previously selected with consummate skill. Their movement was soon made known in the French camp, and there the soldiers, who were making fresh entrenchments, discontinued that work and stood to their arms, shouting "Vive le Roi! Vive le Maréchal de Villars!" They were so confident of success, and of getting into a plentiful country after their victory, that many of them were seen throwing away their rations of bread, in their eagerness to begin the engagement. At seven, Villars mounted his horse, and requested Marshal Boufflers to assume the command of the right wing, while he himself directed the left.

Two such enormous armies have seldom come into direct contact. Numerically they were as nearly as possible equal, each counting, after every reasonable deduction, 98,000 combatants.

The fog lingering on the ground protracted the moment of onset; but at half-past seven the sun broke forth, and as soon as the artillery could point with precision, the fire opened on both sides, with an animation and effect indicative of the ardour which reigned in every bosom. In a moment, the French household troops in the rear of the lines had several killed and wounded, and the allied chiefs witnessed similar effects, as they rode along their own ranks, although the two armies were almost concealed from each other, by the entrenchments and inequalities of the ground. Soon after the opening of the cannonade, Villars and Boufflers repaired to their respective posts; and the two confederate generals also separated: Eugene to direct the movements of the right, and Marlborough those of the centre and left.

The attack commenced on the side of the allies, against the right and centre of the French, in two dense columns, the first under the Prince of Orange, and the other under Count Lottum. Suddenly the Dutch column halted, according to orders, and drew up in several lines beyond the

reach of grape; while that of Lottum moved forward, regardless of the fire, to the rear of the principal allied battery, and, wheeling to the right, formed in three lines. As these columns took their stations, Schulemburg advanced at the head of forty battalions, ranged in three lines.

After a short pause in the cannonade, the signal of onset was given at nine, by a general volley from the grand battery. Schulemburg instantly advanced along the edge of the wood of Sart, direct upon the projecting point of the enemy's left wing, while Lottum marched round the grand battery to attack the other face of the angle; and, as he cleared the ground, Lord Orkney deployed his fifteen battalions to cover his left, and face the hostile centre. The three battalions drawn from the blockading corps before Mons likewise pressed forward, under the orders of Gouvain, and entered the wood of Sart unperceived. At this moment, Eugene came up to the troops of Schulemburg, and found them passing several streamlets, and entering the wood. They were suffered by the enemy to approach within pistol-shot, and then received a volley which forced several battalions to recoil more than two hundred yards. A furious storm of musketry ensued, and the French brigade of Charost being partly advanced in an abatis, was either driven from its station, or withdrew to avoid a flank attack. The Austrian battalions on the right, being impeded by a morass in front, made a circuitous movement, and fell in with the brigade of Gouvain. These corps, thus fortuitously united, began to penetrate into the wood, as fast as the obstructions which they encountered would permit, but were checked by the troops of Charost, and exchanged a vigorous fire of musketry with the enemy.

Scarcely was this attack begun, before Marlborough, advancing towards the centre, led on in person the troops of Count Lottum. At some distance, they were greeted by volleys of musketry from the brigade Du Roi, without shaking the firmness of their ranks; they passed some

enclosures, descending the hollow bank of the rivulet, and waded through the swamp under a galling fire. Reaching the foot of the entrenchment, though disordered by the difficulty of the approach, and the loss they had sustained, they made the most furious effort to ascend the breastwork, but were repulsed by the French troops, who were encouraged by the presence of Villars himself.

Meanwhile, Withers advanced in silence through the woods, in the direction of La Folie, and by this demonstration distracted the attention of the enemy ; but as yet not a single shot was fired on that side. Both the first lines of attack on the right having suffered severely, Eugene and Schulemburg filled up the intervals, and extended the flanks with part of the second ; they then advanced again, and dislodged the brigades of La Reine and Charost, but could not force those of Picardie and La Marine, notwithstanding the great exertions of the Danes, Saxons, and Hessians.

Count Lottum now returned to the attack, while Marlborough placed himself at the head of d'Auvergne's cavalry to sustain him. At this moment, the Duke of Argyle ordered a British brigade of the second line to extend the left, and the whole renewed the charge. As the attacks embraced a wider front, this fresh brigade came opposite an opening in the entrenchments ; but the access was through a marshy spot, almost impassable. While they were entangled in the swamp, the active Chemerault, with twelve battalions, drawn from the second line of the French left centre, passed the entrenchments, and prepared to charge their left flank. But Villars, who was on the border of the wood, remarking Marlborough with his staff, at the head of d'Auvergne's cavalry, galloped forward, and stopped them at the moment when their farther advance would have been fatal. Free on the flank, the left of Count Lottum then penetrated the entrenchment, turned the right of the brigade Du Roi, and forced the French gradually back in the wood.

The brigades of Champagne and Picardie, pressed by the

double assault of Schulemburg on one side, and of Lottum on the other, found a momentary asylum behind an abatis; and the Royal Marine, after a vigorous stand, was compelled to follow their example. The rest retired in disorder through the wood, which was so close, that the lines were broken into parties, and every tree was disputed.

Meantime, the appointed half hour of the first onset had elapsed, when the Prince of Orange, impatient of delay, rashly resolved to attack, although not supported by the corps of Withers, and without waiting the consent of Marshal Tilly.* The left of the whole front was led by Major-general Hamilton and Brigadier Douglas, with four battalions, among whom was the brave Scotch brigade, in four lines, with orders to enter the wood and attack the grenadiers who there covered the right flank of the enemy. Nine battalions, commanded by Spaar and Oxenstiern, were to advance against the salient angle of an entrenchment next the wood; and to the right of these, six battalions, led by Dohna and Heyden, were to carry a battery, placed on the road to Malplaquet. Generals Welderen and Rank, with four battalions, were to skirt the hedges and underwood and force the entrenchment to the right of the battery, while Pallant and Ammama, who had hitherto been kept on the defensive, were now to advance and attack the point of the projecting entrenchment. The whole was supported by the hereditary Prince of Hesse Cassel, with twenty-one squadrons of horse, preceded by the cannon allotted to that corps; a few squadrons remaining behind to observe the opening in rear of the left. On the word to march, all were instantly in motion, headed by the unflinching young Prince of Orange, under an awful fire of grape-shot and

* Marshal Tilly is scarcely mentioned by historians, and seems to have been little more noticed by his officers. Although he commanded the Dutch, all the officers obeyed the young Prince of Orange. The marshal was a brave officer, the creature of the party in opposition to the house of Nassau, and consequently jealous, if not hostile, to the young prince.—*Coxe*.

musketry. The prince had scarcely advanced twenty paces when the brave Oxenstiern was killed by his side; and several aides-de-camp and attendants successively dropped as he went on. The prince's own horse being killed, he rushed forward on foot; and as he passed the opening of the great flanking battery, some of his ranks were entirely swept away; yet he reached the entrenchment, and, waving his hat, in an instant the breastwork was forced at the point of the bayonet, by the Dutch guards and steady Highlanders. But before these brave fellows could deploy, they were charged, and driven from the post, with terrific loss, by the troops of the French left, who had been rallied by Marshal Boufflers. At this moment, the corps under Dohna and Heyden went right up to the battery on the road, penetrated into the embrasures, and took some colours; but before they could reach the breastwork, they were mowed down by the battery thundering on their flank. A dreadful carnage took place among all the troops engaged in this combined attack on the enemy's right; Spaar lay dead upon the field; Hamilton was carried off, badly wounded; and the troops wavered, and recoiled a few paces.

Deriving fresh spirit from this repulse, the heroic Prince of Orange mounted another horse, and when that was shot under him, his native energy was not shaken; he rallied the nearest troops, took a standard from the regiment of Mey, and marched on foot, almost alone, to the entrenchment. He planted the colours on the bank, and called aloud, "Follow me, my friends, here is your post." Foremost among the assailants was the heir of Athol, the gallant Marquis of Tullibardine, followed by his faithful Highlanders; * he sought honour in a foreign service, and died the death of heroes. Lieutenant-general Week shared his glorious fate, and the Swiss brigadier Mey was severely wounded. Again the onset was renewed, but it was no longer possible to force the enemy; for their second line

* The regiments of Tullibardine and Hepburn.—*Coxe*.

had closed up, and the whole breastwork bristled with bayonets, and blazed with fire. The brigade of Navarre, which had been sent to reinforce the centre, was recalled; and the French soldiers, disregarding the control of their officers, opened the entrenchment, and made a furious charge. The disordered ranks of the Dutch battalions were beat back, over heaps of slain companions; they lost several colours, and their advanced battery fell into the hands of the French. In this moment of confusion, though pursued by the French horse grenadiers, whom Boufflers had thrown forward to improve the advantage, they presented so firm a front as to awe their assailants. And as they thus manfully held their ground, they were soon supported by the Prince of Hesse Cassel and his gallant squadrons.

Still matters were in a very alarming state on our left. Therefore, leaving Lottum to continue his successful attack, Marlborough galloped from the right centre to remedy the disorder. On his way, he perceived that General Rantzau, with his two battalions, had attacked a party of the enemy, who quitted the entrenchment to occupy an advanced ravine. The duke likewise remarked the shattered remains of the Dutch infantry reluctantly measuring back their steps to the first enclosures of the French camp, in order to be beyond the reach of grape shot. He accordingly ordered Rantzau to retire to his former post, and not to move again till he should receive directions from himself. With a heavy heart, he beheld many victims of inconsiderate valour, and witnessed with equal concern and admiration numbers of the wounded Dutch returning from the hands of the surgeons, to resume their station in the ranks. Here he was joined by Eugene, bending likewise his course to the left with no less solicitude. While they were giving precautionary orders to that wing, a British officer arrived from the right to inform them that the enemy were attacking there with great fury and evident advantage.

Villars had ineffectually summoned reinforcements from

his right; for Boufflers had enough to do in that quarter, and, although he had made a successful resistance, his ranks were fearfully thinned as well as those of the allies, and he could not detach or spare a single battalion of his infantry. Thus reduced to the necessity of drawing troops from his own centre, Villars reluctantly called the Irish brigade, the brigade of Bretagne, and the brigade of La Sarre, to his assistance, and then charged into the wood of Taisniere, upon the British and Prussians, who formed part of our right. The onset of the Irish in the service of France was so impetuous, that the British and Prussians were made to recoil; but the nature of the ground soon divided the Irish ranks and impeded their progress.

At this moment, the cheers of the allied troops announced the return of Marlborough to that scene of action, to co-operate with the attack made by the army of Eugene.

We have seen how Villars had weakened his own centre. Such a circumstance never escaped the eye of Marlborough, who had already directed Lord Orkney to advance with a strong mass of infantry and cavalry towards that weakened part of the French entrenchments.

At this moment, Eugene, on our extreme right, was furiously renewing the attack with the columns of Schulemberg and Withers. It was Eugene who had rallied the German troops, when retreating and somewhat disordered, and it was he who now gallantly led them to the charge. In this act the hero was struck by a musket-ball behind the ear, which, for an instant, made him reel in the saddle. His attendants pressed him to retire, that the wound might be dressed; but he replied, "If I am fated to die here, to what purpose can it be to dress the wound? If I survive, it will be time enough in the evening." And, with the blood streaming down the neck and over the shoulders, he continued to head the line, rushing to the thickest of the fire. Under such a leader, the men themselves must be heroes. Driving through a narrow perilous opening (*une coulée*), the German

battalions recovered the ground which had been lost, carried the French works in that quarter, and entered the wood almost mixed with the broken and disordered foe. Brave Withers, who was co-operating with Eugene on another line, was now pressing on the rear of the wood on the extreme left of the enemy, and his attacks were so formidable, that Villars galloped thither, and called up the French guards to restore the combat at that point, where, on either side, men and distinguished officers were rapidly falling. Eugene moved in the same direction, and with five German regiments opened a destructive fire. To drive back these new assailants, Villars tried a charge with the bayonet; but, before much could be done, his horse was shot under him, and a second musket-ball struck him in a sensitive part above the knee. Unable to move, he called for a chair, that he might continue in the field; but the exquisite anguish of the wound brought on a faint, and he was carried senseless to the rear. Notwithstanding his absence, his brave troops succeeded in pushing back, for a brief space, the five German regiments. But this success could now be of no avail.

After four hours of close and desperate fighting, the allies had obtained possession of the French entrenchments on the left, and had compelled their opponents to weaken their centre, and to employ almost all their infantry on their flanks.

Marlborough's right, which formed the centre of the allied army, had coolly waited for the proper moment to fall upon the French centre. As the French removed troops and guns, Lord Orkney had begun the attack on that part of the entrenchments by assailing their *redans*, or *flèches*,* which were all taken at a single onset, the Bavarian and Cologne guards stationed in them being left almost unsupported, in consequence of the drafts from the centre to reinforce Villars on the left. Infantry, horse, and artillery

* A *flèche* is a simple species of field-work, usually consisting of two faces forming a salient angle towards some point of difficult access.

broke through at the openings left in the French entrenchments, and spread themselves over the plain, upon troops who had no longer anything to cover them. Almost as soon as the allies were masters of the *redans*, Marlborough sent orders to the grand battery of forty guns, in his centre, to advance through the opening and enter the entrenchment. This artillery work was rapidly and beautifully executed; and now, a tremendous fire was opened upon all that was left of the French centre, and the Prince d'Auvergne, passing the *redans*, or *flèches*, began to form the squadrons of the allied cavalry which he commanded.

“The crisis of this sanguinary battle was now arrived. The intrepid Auvergne was charged by the hostile cavalry, and though only a part of his front was in line, he withstood the shock, and repulsed them. The foremost squadrons of the enemy were dispersed only to make room for nobler champions, who advanced in gallant order; the gay, the vain, yet truly valiant gendarmerie of France, headed by Boufflers. The marshal had remained with his wing, till he received the alarming intelligence that the allies had broken through the centre. Ordering the household horse to follow, he flew to the spot, and found the gendarmes ready to charge; after a short and cheering address, he placed himself at their head, and darted upon his antagonists, who were extending their lines, in proportion as they came up, through the openings of the *redans*. Notwithstanding all the efforts of the gallant Auvergne, the allied squadrons were driven back to the entrenchments; but Lord Orkney, having taken the precaution to post his infantry upon the parapets, poured in a most destructive fire, which repulsed the gendarmes in their turn. Thrice these charges were repeated, and thrice the impetuous assailants were repulsed by the combined fires of the musketry, and the cross batteries on the flanks.

“In the midst of this arduous struggle, Marlborough came up, and led forward a second line of British and Prussian

cavalry, under the command of Bulau and Wood. They fell on the discomfited squadrons who were attempting to withdraw, and would have swept them from the field, but for the advance of a formidable body of 2,000 men, consisting of the gardes de corps, light horse, mousquetaires, and horse grenadiers of the royal household."* This *élite* of the French cavalry, which had galloped from the right to aid the broken centre, was also led to the charge by the dauntless Boufflers, who broke through the first and second lines of the allies, and threw their third line into some confusion. But Prince Eugene, having nothing more to do on the right, was following Marlborough to the centre, and at the very moment he was wanted he came up at full gallop, with the whole of his cavalry. Boufflers was repulsed, the French were outflanked, and, galled by a cross fire from our infantry, they again retreated to the plain. Their spirit, however, was not subdued; for they still rallied, and even renewed the charge several times before the allied cavalry could be formed within the entrenchments. But that operation being effected, the intrepid French horse, assailed with a spirit quite equal to their own, and with numbers now far superior, were cut down, swept bodily from the field, and driven across a rivulet which bore the appropriate name of Camp Perdu.†

Before this decisive charge was made, the Prince of Hesse pushed forward in column, passed the *redans*, wheeled to the left, and took the right wing of the French infantry in flank. This daring manœuvre induced the enemy to crowd to their right, but there they were again attacked by the Prince of Orange, who had re-occupied the entrenchments; and now a shout along the line announced that the enemy were as completely beaten on their right as on their centre.

Surveying the field from behind the rivulet of Camp Perdu, Boufflers himself saw his centre pierced, his right turned and

* Archdeacon Coxe.

† The Lost Camp.

dislodged, and all communication with his left cut off. Still, having rallied his brilliant cavalry, and portions of his infantry, he lingered on the field, "loth to depart," until news was brought him that the disjointed French left was in full retreat. Then, having done all that a brave and skilful man could do, he could do nothing more but order a general retreat in the direction of Bavai. Forming his infantry in three great masses behind his cavalry, and seeing them put on three several lines of march which would converge at Bavai, he made his horse face about to follow and protect the rear. Beyond the woods, in front of Bavai, the three columns joined, and there halted for a brief space, to collect stragglers, and break down bridges: they then crossed the Hon, and, continuing to march by night, they reached a camp between Quesnoi and Valenciennes, about thirteen miles from the field of battle. It was a masterly retreat, and warmly applauded both by Marlborough and Eugene; but Boufflers would not have been quite so successful in bringing off his men if the allied troops had not been worn out by the tremendous fatigues of that long day of incessant marching, or hard fighting. Exhausted with fatigue, they were halted on the plain where they had fought, and soon lay stretched on the ground, from Malplaquet to beyond Taisniere, the greater part buried in sleep, among the killed and wounded.

As the combat was so close and fierce, comparatively few prisoners were made by the victors: not above 500 appear to have been taken; but more than 3,000 were left wounded on the field. The French had fought so much under cover, and parts of their entrenchments and field-works were so skilfully set, and so very strong, that the conquerors lost considerably more men than the conquered. There are many doubts and disputes about numbers and other matters; but this fact appears to be indisputable, and it is easily to be accounted for by what has been said in the preceding sentence.

The loss of the allies in killed and wounded may be safely set down at 20,000 men, or one in every five.* Villars transmitted to Paris fabulous accounts of his own loss, which, though inferior, must surely have amounted to 14,000 men, exclusive of many who deserted in a day or two after the battle. Malplaquet was, indeed, what a great writer has called it, "The bloodiest action of the whole war, and the best-fought battle in which the French at this period were ever defeated." †

In a letter written shortly after the battle, a French officer of distinction said, "The Eugenes and Marlboroughs ought to be well satisfied with us during that day; since till then they had not met with resistance worthy of them. They may say, with justice, that nothing can stand before them; and, indeed, what shall be able to stem the rapid course of the two heroes, if an army of 100,000 of the best troops, posted between two woods, trebly entrenched, and performing their duty as well as any brave men could do, were not able to stop them one day? Will you not then own with me, that they surpass all the heroes of former ages?" ‡

On this memorable day, both Eugene and Marlborough exposed themselves more frequently than they had done in any former battle; each aided the other at the critical moments; both were repeatedly in the thickest of the *melée*, or under the hottest fire; the prince, as we have seen, was hit, but the duke escaped unhurt.

In both armies, the loss of officers was unusually great. Among them were many of high rank, On the side of the allies, the deaths of Baron Spaar, Count Oxenstiern, Generals Week, Pittau, Goor, Lallo, and Lord Tullibardine, were lamented; and, besides Prince Eugene, Generals Spaen, Webb, Wackerbach, Hamilton, Cronstrom, and Mey, and Colonel Sir John Pendergast were wounded.

* At the battle of Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington's loss, in killed and wounded, was nearly one man in every three.

† Southey.

‡ Extract given by Archdeacon Cox.

The French mourned over the loss of the Marquis of Chemerault, the Marquis of Charost, Count de Beuil, Baron Pallavicini, Count Moncaut d'Autrey, the Chevalier d'Ervi, Colonels Chardon and Moret of the guards, and Colonel Steckemberg of Alsace. Among their wounded were Marshal Villars, the Duke of Guiche, M. de Tourne-mine, Albergotti, Courcillon, Count Augeunes, the Duke of St. Agnan, the Marquis de Zele, the Marquis de Gondrin, and the Pretender, son of James II.

Yes, the unfortunate, but equally imprudent and incapable son of James, fought against his countrymen, and suffered at Malplaquet, where he is said to have displayed some personal valour while acting with the rear-guard in covering the retreat.

The Cameronian colonel, Blackader, who acknowledges that he had not expected to see the French fight so well, says it was the most deliberate, solemn, and well-ordered battle that ever he saw; a noble and fine disposition, and as finely executed: every one was at his post, and he never saw troops engage with more cheerfulness, boldness, and resolution. For himself, the hardy Scot assures us, that he never had a more pleasant day in his life.*

* This John Blackader was a hero and an oddity fit for Walter Scott: he was the son of the famous John Blackader, one of the first followers and most enthusiastic preachers of Richard Cameron, the founder of the ultra-Presbyterian sect in the days of Charles II. and Duke Lauderdale. The old preacher, who appears to have been as fearless as his son, died a state prisoner on the Bass Rock.

Captain Blackader, the son, was one of the first officers appointed to the Cameron regiment, when raised in King William's days. He went abroad with his corps, and fought under Marlborough in most of his battles. He was a brave and excellent soldier, but his strong and gloomy sectarian feelings never forsook him. According to the curious diary which he kept, he found a grim pleasure in walking over the field the day after battle, and counting the corpses; this he called "getting a preaching from the dead."—See "Life and Diary of Colonel Blackader," "Memoirs of the Rev. John Blackader," etc.

There was that display of humanity and tenderness, which was never wanting on the part of Marlborough after a victory. On the ensuing morning, he rode over the bloody field, surveying, with a heavy heart, the numerous bodies of the dead and dying, strewed over the plain, or heaped upon each other. He gave orders for the decent interment of the dead, and for the removal and immediate succour of the wounded.

“Nor did he feel only for the sufferings of his companions in arms; the groans of the wounded enemies, and the sight of their mangled limbs, equally awakened his compassion. Learning also that many French officers and soldiers had crept into the neighbouring houses and woods, wounded, and in a miserable condition, for want of assistance, he ordered them every possible relief, and despatched a messenger with a letter to the French marshals, humanely proposing a conference at Bavai between General Cadogan and any officer whom they should choose to appoint, to arrange the means of conveying away these wretched sufferers. The meeting took place accordingly between Cadogan and the Chevalier Luxembourg, and the arrangements were amicably settled, two days being allowed for burying the dead, and removing the wounded,* the officers pledging their parole not to serve till regularly exchanged, and the soldiers to be considered as prisoners of war, for whom an equal number of the allied troops were to be returned. The number of the wounded, who might shortly have terminated their wretched existence, did not amount to less than 3,000 men.

“The generous commander was so deeply affected with this painful task, and so much harassed by continual exertions, as to be seriously indisposed. His faithful secretary, Cardonel, fearful lest some exaggerated account of his illness should reach England, communicated it to the duchess as the mere result of over-fatigue; adding, that he had con-

* Letter from the duke to Secretary Boyle, September 16th.

fined himself to his chamber, and was already recovering. The duke himself casually observed in his letters to his wife and Godolphin, that he had not recovered the fatigue of the battle, and the want of sleep for two days and two nights. He likewise complained of a continual headache and soreness of limbs, as well as of an inward heat, which excoriated his lips, and was accompanied with feverish and nervous debility.”*

Grief for the tremendous slaughter, and the loss of so many dear friends and faithful followers, was the main cause of this malady. On the 3rd of October, when he was recovering from it, he wrote to Lord Godolphin,—“In so great an action, it is impossible to get the advantage without exposing men’s lives; but the lamentable sight and thoughts of it have given me so much disquietude, that I believe it the chief cause of my illness; for it is melancholy to see so many brave men killed with whom I have lived these eight years, when we thought ourselves sure of a peace.”

The same tenderness of heart is continually breaking out in the duke’s correspondence. It is said that Napoleon Bonaparte could ride over a field thickly covered with the dead, and call it *un beau spectacle*—a fine sight—and that extraordinary man seems never to have betrayed any deep emotion at the loss of his friends and adherents, except when the rough and boisterous Duroc was killed. To this mingled stoicism and cynicism, Marlborough had no pretension. Strung and firm as it was in battle, his heart, when the fight was over, was as gentle as a woman’s. Of him it may be most truly said,—

. “His gentle heart ne’er gave
One pain or trouble that he knew to save.”†

Constant to their evil practices, the factious calumniators of the great soldier’s fame in England were not silent; at this very moment, they were criticising the battle of Mal-

* Archdeacon Coxe.

† Langhorne.

plaquet, as they had done Blenheim and every victory he had won, and were censuring the attack as rash and imprudent, and as a wanton sacrifice of so many gallant men to his personal ambition, without any solid benefit to the allies. They swelled the account of the killed and wounded, with the arithmetic familiar to party journalists and pamphlet writers; they presented pictures far exceeding the horrors of the reality, and they impudently attributed the frightful carnage of the left wing to his incapacity and indifference to bloodshed. On that wing, the loss of the allies was mainly attributable to that brave, but rash, attack which the Prince of Orange had made, quite contrary to the duke's instructions, which, had they been followed, would have led to the same result, without the loss of 8,000 men, the very flower of the Dutch infantry. Moreover, had one-half of these veterans been reserved, they might have been employed in intercepting the retreat of the French. Most rarely does any great battle go off without some blunders. This was the one great error committed at Malplaquet. But Marlborough could not cast blame on the heroic young Prince of Orange, without injury to his country and to the common cause; and, therefore, with his habitual magnanimity, he put forward no plea, and bore the whole weight of the abuse. But, afterwards, when he could fix upon the slanderer, and expose all these misstatements without mischief to England or her allies, he nobly resented and clearly exposed the falsehoods.

Marshal Villars was too vain to give his great adversary the praise which he merited, and which he himself was always ready to bestow on valour and skill, whether displayed by friend or foe. Yet could Villars boast of nothing but of the dear price at which Marlborough had purchased his victory; for he could not deny the retreat of the French army; he could not protect Mons, for the defence of which place he had fought the battle; and he could neither face Marlborough again nor check him in any direction.

“ There remained, in fact, no cause to palliate, no subterfuge to cover the defeat which the French had sustained. They could not impute it to want of confidence in their commander, or want of skill ; to want of conduct or of courage in the army, or in any part of it ; nor to any disadvantages of ground, nor to any error or mishap of any kind. They had chosen their position and strengthened it. They had stood their ground well : men, officers, and commander had done their best ; the only one blunder had been committed by their enemies, and owing to that, and to the advantage of their post, they had inflicted a loss greater by nearly one-third than what they had sustained ; and yet they had been beaten. The consequence was that they never afterwards ventured to meet Marlborough in the field.”*

While the duke was yet suffering under his illness, he was busied in preparing the means for the reduction of Mons. That place was invested without delay. On the 14th of September, the duke encamped in the vicinity, and the 15th, the fourth day after the battle, was, to use his own expression, observed very devoutly throughout the whole army as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God for the

* Southey. The duke's own very short account of the battle of Malplaquet, in a letter to Mr. Secretary Boyle, will be found in the fourth volume of Sir George Murray's work. In this letter he states, that the two nights preceding the battle his troops had lain under their arms ; that the fight was maintained with great obstinacy till near twelve o'clock, when the entrenched foes were forced out of the wood into the plain ; that the whole army engaged and fought with great fury till past three in the afternoon, when the enemy's horse began to give way. The trophies of the field were twenty-six standards, twenty colours, four pair of kettledrums, and sixteen pieces of cannon. “ We took likewise near 400 officers, of whom upwards of fourscore were of the household ; most of these gentlemen being wounded, were sent back upon their parole for two or three months.”—Marlborough to the Earl of Sunderland ; *Sir G. Murray's Despatches*, vol. iv.

victory ; and the evening concluded with a triple discharge of artillery and small arms.

Villars, as we have said, would do nothing for the relief of this important place—important, but far from being so strong as Tournay, where the allies had lost many men and officers—the besiegers did not deem it necessary even to draw a line of circumvallation ; the only impediments in the way of immediate approaches were the continuance of tempestuous weather and heavy rains, and the delays of the convoys with the heavy artillery. The guns, however, were brought up from Brussels, and the trenches were opened by the 25th of September. To interrupt operations, the garrison made a sally, and, in the *melée* which ensued, brave Cadogan, the favourite officer—if Marlborough had a favourite—was dangerously wounded. This was another heavy blow to the tender-hearted commander-in-chief, who grieved, as if for his own son, until Cadogan was declared to be out of danger. The approaches, however, were pushed with celerity, and, on the 9th of October, a lodgment was effected on an important part of the works, with small loss to the assailants. On the 16th, other advantages were obtained ; and, on the 18th, the garrison surrendered, with such marks of honour as the allied generals were pleased to allow.

During the siege of Mons, the gallant Duke of Argyle distinguished himself in a manner which is deserving of mention, even in this condensed work, which is not meant to be a history of the War of the Succession, but a manual-memoir of Marlborough. Seeing an attacking corps shrinking under an awful fire of the enemy, the duke pushed among them, and, throwing open his coat and vest, exclaimed,—“ You see, brothers, I have no concealed armour. I am exposed equally with you ; I require none to go where I shall refuse to venture. Remember ! you fight for the liberties of Europe and the glory of your country, which shall never suffer by my behaviour ; and I hope the

character of a Briton is as dear to every one of you as it is to me." The men instantly rallied, rushed forward, stormed the work in their front, and took it. This striking anecdote is taken from a singular book, entitled, "The Memoirs of Mrs. Christian Davies." The authoress was commonly called in the army, by which she was long and well known, Polly Ross, or Moll Ross. She served as a common soldier in an English cavalry regiment, till her sex was discovered in consequence of a wound received in action. She afterwards followed the camp as a *vivandière* or sutler, and was several times rewarded for her intelligence, adroitness, and courage.*

By the conquest of Mons, the great towns in Brabant and

* We should not," says Archdeacon Coxe, "quote this book as military authority, but as she seems to have been an eyewitness of some of the Duke of Argyle's gallant actions, we think her testimony in this respect worthy of credit."

There is evidence to prove that the Duke of Argyle afterwards took a warm interest in the fate of this female soldier.

Many years ago, we read the original memoirs of Mrs. Davies in the British Museum, or in some other repository of rare books, and our impression was that the book was substantially true. Smollet made Moll Ross stand for his picture of Moll of Flanders; but the portrait was exaggerated and incorrect; Moll Ross, with many sins to answer for, never having been anything like a monster. Before the discovery of her sex she had been repeatedly wounded: she had fought at Blenheim, at Ramilies, and in other hot affairs. Returning to England at the end of the war, she was recommended by the Duke of Argyle to present a petition to Queen Anne, which she did, setting forth that, for twelve years, she had served in the Earl of Orkney's regiment as a man,—had received several wounds, and afterwards lost two husbands in the service. The queen graciously received the petition, gave her 50*l.* in ready money, and conferred upon her a pension of one shilling a day. The heroine married again, naturally taking a soldier for her mate. This poor fellow, whose name was Davies, became an inmate of Chelsea Hospital, his wife residing in that neighbourhood, and nursing her husband in his sickness. She died on the 7th of July 1739, and was interred, with military honours, in the burying-ground belonging to Chelsea Hospital.—See Caulfield's

Flanders were covered, and the French were at length confined within the limits of their own frontiers. Had Marlborough's advice been followed in 1706, Mons would then have been taken, and the expense of blood at Oudenarde and Malplaquet would have been spared. After an hour's solemn thanksgiving, the allied army went into winter quarters, and Marlborough and Eugene repaired to the Hague.

At this time, the Duke committed what has been called the only indiscreet act with which he can be justly charged. But if the act were an indiscretion, it was urged upon him by the weightiest considerations that could occupy the mind of a great soldier and patriotic statesman. He knew that the army which had followed him so long, and by which he was perfectly idolized, would not so willingly follow a new leader; he knew that, without any flattery to his self-vanity, there was not an officer in his army so capable as himself of the supreme command, although there were many that were excellent and admirable as *seconds*; and, superior genius apart, the devotion of the men, and the thorough subordination of every part of the army to Marlborough, gave him inestimable advantages over every competitor or successor. He had seen for years the extreme difficulty of keeping together, in good harmony, the soldiers of so many nations, any serious quarrel among whom might at any moment turn victory into defeat, or derange the plan of an entire campaign; like Wellington at a later period, in the Peninsula, he had reconciled national jealousies and antagonistic fanaticisms, but he knew the pains that all this had cost him, and could scarcely hope that any other

Remarkable Persons, etc. Gleig's Chelsea Pensioners. Gentleman's Magazine, etc.

Moll was far from being of the lowest rank of life. She was a native of Dublin; her maiden name was Cavenagh; her father was a substantial brewer in the Irish capital, but, during the war waged in Ireland between William III. and James II., his substance was consumed, and the family fell into poverty.

man less patient in temper, less practised, and less distinguished by victory and uninterrupted success, could exercise the same influence over all these foreign bands: he had brought the war to that point which, unless its advantages should be basely thrown away, must soon end in a glorious peace, and he could bear neither the chances of such sacrifice, nor a deprivation of the honours of being the great pacificator; in short, he felt that even now the conduct of the war, if renewed, could not be safe in any other hands, and that he who had made the war ought also to make the peace. As a negotiator, a diplomatist, and statesman, his qualifications surpassed, beyond the limits of comparison, those of any living Englishman; he was personally acquainted with nearly all the sovereigns of Europe, their ministers, favourites, generals, and courtiers,—and, even in those courts where he was not personally known, his name had a prestige, a deference was paid to his judgment and opinions, and the report of his amiable manners had won him all hearts; these princes, these ministers, these courts, must continue to be soothed and conciliated, or the final settlement of the War of Succession must be difficult and unsatisfactory; and where but in Marlborough existed all the qualifications required at this important juncture? Whenever he was away for a brief interval from the army, it was like a body without a soul. This was felt as deeply by the foreign troops as by the British. Whenever any difficulty arose, at the Hague, Hanover, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, Vienna, or Turin, no faith or hope was had in any diplomacy except that of the duke.

That which Marlborough did under these circumstances, was this:—Sensible that the Queen was entirely alienated from him by Harley, St. John, and the other men of intrigue to whom, through Mrs. Masham, she had given her whole confidence, and that his enemies were daily becoming more active and more virulent,—for the sake of strengthening himself while Godolphin and his friends were

yet in office, he asked for a patent which should constitute him captain-general for life. The lord-chancellor Cowper doubted whether this were constitutional, as the office had never been conferred otherwise than during pleasure. But the duke persisted. The request served only to increase the Queen's anger against him, to give his enemies an opportunity for alarming her Majesty, and to gratify both her and them by the mortification which her positive and harshly expressed refusal inflicted upon him and upon the duchess, on whose account he felt more than double the anguish he would otherwise have experienced.*

On taking leave of the States at the Hague, Marlborough expressed a gloomy foreboding of the treatment which awaited him at home, saying, "I am grieved that I am obliged to return to England, where my services to your republic will be turned to my disgrace." And it was an unhappy intriguing, busy, troublous time which the duke, whose over-toiled mind and body both required repose, spent at home, in the winter of 1709-10. The preaching, and still worse, the ministerial prosecution and public trial of Henry Sacheverell, hitherto an obscure parson over in Southwark, drove our changeable people into an hysterical passion of ultra-Toryism, and the fit, though brief, wonderfully served the turn of the enemies of Marlborough and Godolphin, and brought the quasi-Whig government to the very verge of dissolution and impeachment.

By the 18th of March 1710, Marlborough was again on the continent, and preparing to join his victorious, enthusiastic army, to whom his return was always as a fête. But, at Malplaquet, he had gained his last victory and completed his military glory; his soldiers, who would have followed him through fire, and have fought heedless of an earthquake, were destined to feel no more the "raptures of the fight." The negotiations of the preceding year were

* Southey. Archdeacon Coxe. General Sir George Murray's Letters and Despatches of the Duke.

renewed, and broken off upon the same ground, not *by* Marlborough's advice but *against* it. He who, for so long a term of years, had been left to act, in politics as well as in war, for and by himself, was now lessoned and lectured by incompetent or dishonest people at home, and was thwarted in all his proceedings abroad. Seeing the decline of his favour and influence in his own country, foreigners were no longer disposed to treat his opinions with the deference they had hitherto paid to them; and not a few of these mongrel diplomatists now courted the friendship of Harley and St. John, who had agents and allies in court and camp. The duke was no longer the moving master-mind in all foreign negotiations. Like a wise man, he determined to incur as little responsibility as possible for measures which he was not allowed to direct or even to influence. He called himself *a sheet of white paper*, upon which the home government might write their directions.

The campaign opened with another most successful breaking through of the enemy's lines, which ought to have led to a battle, but did not. "I bless God," said the duke, "for putting it into their heads not to defend the lines; for at Pont de Vendin, where I passed, the Mareschal d'Artagnan was with 20,000 men, which, if he had stayed, must have made it very doubtful. But, God be praised! we are come here without the loss of any men. The excuse the French make is, that we came four days before they expected us." This bold movement was preparatory to the siege of Douay. It was expected that Villars, notwithstanding the souvenirs of Malplaquet, would hazard a battle to prevent this siege; for Douay was a post of great importance, to which the allies could bring all their stores by water, even from Amsterdam. And as Villars had now a great superiority in numbers, Marlborough really looked forward to an action, though not with the buoyant heart of former days, for "the cursed spirit of faction" was

now manifesting itself even in the army. He believed that, from the nature of the country, the battle, if fought at all, would be very decisive. "I long for an end of the war," says he, "so God's will be done. Whatever the events may be, I shall have nothing to reproach myself with, having with all my heart done my duty, and being hitherto blessed with more success than ever was known before. My wishes and duty are the same: but I can't say I have the same sanguine prophetic spirit I did use to have; for in all the former actions I did never doubt of success, we having had constantly the great blessing of being of one mind. I cannot say it is so now, for I fear some are run so far into villanous faction, that it would give them most content to see us beaten; but if I live, I will be so watchful that it shall not be in their power to do much hurt."

Douay fell; the skilful dispositions of Villars prevented the allies from laying siege to Arras, which had been their intention; they therefore turned upon Bethune, which they invested, and won. The French marshals constructed a series of defences to cover the interior of France; and the allies closed the campaign by the capture of Aire and St. Venant.

Meanwhile, the Godolphin ministry was completely undermined, and the Whigs generally were fooled as well as overthrown. The Duchess of Marlborough, high-minded as she was, still clung to a court by which she was hated, and dreaded a dismissal from her office as Mistress of the Robes as something disgraceful and unbearable. The duke, who had owed so much to her influence in the early part of the reign of Anne, and who continued to love her with a passion quite rare in persons of their respective ages, clung to his wife, and was by her induced to play the part of a very humble suppliant. In a private interview, he implored the queen not to remove the duchess until the end of the war, which might reasonably be expected in the course of another year, when, he said, they would both

retire together. The queen was inflexible, and insisted that the duchess's gold key should be delivered up within three days. Even on his knees Marlborough entreated for an extension of the term to ten days, that means might be devised for rendering the blow less mortifying to his wife. Let the conjugal tenderness and momentary weakness of one of the greatest who have ever borne the name of Englishman, be pardoned and forgotten. This was the last display of that amiable frailty. Anne insisting upon having the gold key within the three days, as she had specified, the duke delivered it to her that very same evening. Not being prepared for so prompt an obedience, Anne was startled and confused, and behaved as if she was borne down and confounded by a sense of her own ingratitude. But these feelings in the royal breast probably lasted no longer than until her next closeting with Mrs. Masham and Harley. The duke's own feeling of resentment was not so transitory, and it would have led him to resign the command of the army immediately after his wife's resignation of the gold key; but the advice of the duchess herself and of Lord Godolphin, a consideration of what was due to Prince Eugene, to the members of the grand alliance, and to the general good, together with the hope of being yet enabled to complete the services which he had rendered to his country and to Europe, by concluding a safe and lasting peace, overcame the impulse, and induced him to retain the command. We agree heart and soul with the great prose writer, * whom we have so often quoted, in the estimate of Marlborough's conduct at this crisis. The conduct was magnanimous, because it involved the sacrifice of all personal feelings and considerations; it was magnanimous, because it even hazarded his military reputation, by serving under a ministry whose malevolence he knew, and from whom he had reason to expect nothing but ill-usage, or insincerity and trickery; it was magnani-

* Southey.

mous, because he put up with insults to the wife of his bosom, and risked everything for the almost hopeless chance of benefiting the common cause, or of lessening the amount of evil which he thought might be incurred if he stayed quietly at home. This conduct was, in fact, one of the greatest proofs of true greatness in the life of Marlborough.

And never did the stratagetical genius of our great soldier shine forth more brilliantly than during this his last campaign, when—out of himself—there was everything to depress and nothing to encourage him.

He reached the Hague on the 4th of March, and with all his old vigour began immediately to prepare for military operations. The army on his arrival was in excellent spirits, and Prince Eugene was on the point of joining it with a very large force, of which the state of war in other quarters now allowed the emperor to dispose. But, unhappily for the duke, the Emperor Joseph died at Vienna, of the smallpox, on the 16th of April, and Charles, the claimant to the Spanish crown, who succeeded him, not only stopped the march of Eugene and of his reinforcements, but also called from the Netherlands nearly all the Imperialist cavalry, which had been serving in that country and on the French frontiers under Eugene and his great colleague. Marlborough was thus weakened, and left by himself.

During the duke's absence in England, the French had busily employed themselves in forming and strengthening a new series of lines, extending from Namur to the coast of Picardy, beyond Montreuil. Villars relied so confidently upon the strength of these defences, that he boasted of having at last brought Marlborough to his *ne plus ultra*. The French marshal being also encouraged by the diminution of force which Eugene's removal had occasioned, sent word to his antagonist that he should be stronger than he, by good 30,000 men. Upon this the duke calmly

remarked, "If their superiority be even as great as he says it will be, I should not apprehend much from them, but that of their being able to hinder us from acting, which to my own particular would be mortification enough; for since constant success has not met with approbation at home, what may I not expect when nothing is done? As I rely very much on Providence, so I shall be ready at improving all occasions that may offer."

But whatever superiority of numbers the French may have possessed, Louis XIV. was at this time playing too sure a game with Harley and Bolingbroke, and the rest of the English ultra-Tory cabinet, to hazard anything in the field; and Villars, therefore, was positively commanded not to risk an engagement.

Marlborough's object was to invest Bouchain. In order to do this, he must break through these new French lines, as he had broken through so many old ones. Knowing that the consent of the Dutch generals and deputies could never be obtained for so difficult an attempt with a force which was in reality far inferior in numbers to that of the enemy, he planned how he might imperceptibly bring them into a situation where they must perceive the necessity of the bold measure he proposed, and how he might deceive and discompose Villars at the same time. With wonderful skill he effected both objects, duping the enemy so effectually, that having first made them demolish the fortifications at Arleux, which impeded his project, he got within their boasted lines on the 4th of August, without losing a single man. Prince Eugene, though far away, exulted in this brilliant and unforeseen success. Bolingbroke and many more of the duke's worst enemies expressed their astonishment at this wonderful generalship. "Marlborough's manœuvres," says a French writer, "covered him with glory: it was a duel in which the English commander beat the French general, the armies on either side being present only to render the spectacle the more magnificent. In

battles and sieges, fortune and the bravery of soldiers often contribute greatly to success ; but here everything was the work of the duke. To gain the lines, the allies would willingly have compounded for the loss of several thousand lives ; thanks to the duke, they were won without the loss of one life. That bloodless victory was entirely owing to his wisdom.”*

Villars now endeavoured, in spite of his orders, to lure the duke into a battle, as the only means of wiping off the disgrace, and even the Dutch deputies were so elated by the success against the lines, that they urged him to attack the French ; but Marlborough knew, from the nature of the ground and the exhausted state of his men, who had marched ten or twelve leagues the preceding day and night, that this could not be done with any reasonable prospect of advantage. He had gained his object without a battle. The Cameronian colonel, the hard-praying and hard-fighting Blackader, in confessing that he longed for the combat, bears a just testimony to the great commander. He says, “It was very near carried in a council of war, that we should attack them ; but it was resolved otherwise, to the regret of most part of the army. In such cases *vox exercitus vox Dei*. Our soldiers were much encouraged by their success in passing the lines, and the enemy much discouraged. When God delivers our enemy into our hand, and we let them escape, he often allows them to be more troublesome afterwards. On the other hand, we are not to be suspicious of our general’s conduct ; we have more reason to admire it, and to believe he knows a thousand times better what is to be done than we. Submissive obedience is our duty, and I give it heartily. If any man deserves implicit obedience, I think *he* does, both in respect to his capacity and integrity.”

Two days after forcing the lines, Marlborough, in presence of a superior force, invested Bouchain, the armies

* Rousset.

being so near, and in so extraordinary a situation, that the besiegers were bombarded by part of Villars' artillery.* But the French marshal was effectually cut off from the fortress, and the end of all his attempts to relieve it was the mortification of seeing the garrison, consisting of eight battalions and 500 horse, march out as prisoners of war.†

Marlborough was reproached in his own day by a set of professed wits and literary men (nearly every one of whom had tasted of his bounty, and had afterwards stung him with their ingratitude), as a hard, unimaginative man, incapable of enjoying the charms of the belles lettres, and altogether indifferent to the interests of literature; and these charges have been repeated almost down to our own day. They were as unfounded as the rest of the calumnies. If the duchess, who had good reasons for disliking certain living poets, did, in her old age, extend her aversion to poetry itself, there is no proof of the duke having done so. It appears, on the contrary, that, without any pretension to literature himself, he continued to prize and respect it in others. During this campaign of 1711, while the two hostile armies were in presence, or closely watching each other, the estates of the archbishopric of Cambrai lay exposed to the plunder of the troops. That French see was then occupied by the pious and humane Fenelon, the author of a book which has been familiar to the youthful days of all of us—the “Adventures of Telemachus.” To shield that prelate from harm, Marlborough ordered a detachment to guard his magazines of corn at Chateau Cambresis, and gave a safe-

* “I believe there is hardly one instance of an inferior army thus posting themselves, so as to be able to form a siege, and keep the communication open with their own country, in sight of an enemy so much superior.”—Note from St. John, Lord Bolingbroke.

To distress the besiegers, Villars burnt all the forage in the neighbourhood, and even set fire to several French towns and villages.

† Bouchain surrendered at discretion on the 13th of September.—Sir George Murray's Marlborough Despatches.

conduct for their conveyance to the city of Cambray; and when he saw that even this protection, in consequence of the scarcity of bread, was not likely to be respected by the soldiery, he sent a corps of dragoons, with wagons, to transport the grain and see it safe to the precincts of the town, where Fenelon's people might receive it.*

The duke next meditated the capture of Quesnoy. The new government at home not only approved of his plan, but assured him that they were making earnest instances with the Dutch for the purpose of obtaining their zealous concurrence; and, all the time, these ministers were deceiving their general, were carrying on a secret negotiation with France, and were even agreeing to the preliminaries of that peace by which the interests of their allies and their country were betrayed. Harley, now Lord Oxford, excelled himself in craft and perfidy at this juncture. His letters to Marlborough might have deceived the grandfather of lies and cunning. At last, seeing clearly that it was willed in the cabinet of St. James that Quesnoy should not be taken, the duke calmly represented that France was now quite open to invasion, and that peace might be dictated in her interior, if the allies would only avail themselves of the opportunities which war had given them. He put his army into winter-quarters for the last time; and returned to England, to encounter the now boldly-avowed malice of his implacable enemies.

Harley, now Earl of Oxford, was premier; St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, had the secretary's seals; the eccentric Earl of Peterborough was named ambassador to the court of Vienna; and all the public men most obnoxious to Godolphin and Marlborough, and most deeply involved in political and court intrigues, were either in office, or employed and trusted secretly by those who directed the queen's affairs. Not only did the un-English crew throw

* One short, but most respectful letter from the duke to Fenelon, is given by Sir George Murray, vol. iv.

away the fruits of victory, but they also ran very near to making a wreck of their country and constitution. When Marlborough had Villars on the hip, and when every letter that came from France spoke of the weakness and necessities of that country, they pledged themselves to admit Louis to a peace upon terms far more favourable than any that had been offered to him at the beginning of the war, while the contest was as yet uncertain, and Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet were battles to be fought.

As brief biographers, we may, like Southey, spare ourselves the humiliating task of describing the manœuvres, tricks, and plots by which the disgraceful peace of Utrecht was brought about. The agents at home felt so secure of their power through Mrs. Masham, and at the same time were so conscious of their deserts, that they jested among themselves about the scaffold and the gallows, to which they might be exposed, if they lost the protection of the queen, or if, perchance, Anne should die *pendente lite*; and the ministers and negotiators they employed abroad espoused so openly the interest of the enemy, that Prince Eugene indignantly asked whether they had been sent to serve England or to serve France. They maintained an illicit correspondence with the French court; they had secret interviews with French agents, unknown to the ministers and diplomatic agents of our allies; they received from M. de Torcy their *mots d'ordre*, together with compliments, thanks, and promises. Next to St. John, no man was more busy in these foul intrigues than Matt Prior, the wit and poet, to whom Marlborough had been a friend and great benefactor, and by whom he was now lampooned and scurrilously assailed. While making an illegal journey with a French abbé, who had been a spy, Prior got arrested at Canterbury. Had the Whigs been in power, there were acts of parliament which would have justified stretching the poet's neck at Tyburn; but under the Tories, who had

employed him, with the queen's sanction, Matt's neck was safe, and he was rewarded as well as liberated.* In vain, the majority of our allies complained that we were playing at riddles with them; in vain, the Emperor Charles called upon us to persevere in the objects proposed by the grand alliance; in vain, the Elector of Hanover, who was only a step from the throne of Great Britain, reasoned, remonstrated, and protested.

But the whole scheme of this nefarious administration could not be carried out so long as Marlborough was at the head of the army on the continent. It was impossible to make him act treacherously towards our allies; and it was always to be feared that by some signal stroke he might at once defeat the French army and the schemes of the English cabinet. The removal of the duke, therefore, was necessary to the success of their plans, and this alone would prove how rightly he acted in not resigning the command on the disgrace of the duchess. The means by which the Harleys and St. Johns brought about his dismissal were, indeed, worthy of the men.† First, they accused him of being fond of war for the sake of his pay as commander-in-chief; and next, they accused him of base speculation. In the month of December, when the queen opened parliament in person, they put into her Majesty's mouth these cruelly reproachful words:—"I have beheld with tenderness and grief, the sufferings of my people, forced into the field, not to defend their native country, not to uphold the church and state, but to gratify the inordinate

* See *Memoirs of the Secret Services of John Macky, Esq.*, a very curious and amusing book. Macky himself was the man that found the poet (going by the name of Matthews), in an alehouse at Canterbury. Bolingbroke threatened to hang poor Macky for his intermeddling; but as this could not be done, the man was persecuted; his creditors were hounded upon him, and Macky lay in prison until the accession of George I.

† Southey.

ambition of my allies abroad, and my *late* ministers at home, to the eternal reproach of Christianity . . . But I am glad that I can now tell you that, notwithstanding the arts of those who delight in war, both place and time are appointed for opening the treaty of a general peace." A violent debate ensued, in which the Earl of Nottingham, and some other honest Tories, deserted Harley, and spoke against the royal speech. The Duke of Marlborough rose, and said:—"I can declare, with a safe conscience, in the presence of her Majesty, who knows me, and now hears me; in the presence of this illustrious assembly, and of Almighty God, who is infinitely above all the powers upon earth, and before whom, according to the ordinary course of nature, I must soon appear to give an account of my actions, that I ever was desirous of a safe, honourable, and lasting peace; and far from any design of prolonging the war for my own private advantage, as my enemies have most falsely insinuated. My age, my numerous fatigues in war, make me ardently wish for the power to enjoy a quiet repose, in order to think of eternity. I had not the least inducement, on any account, to desire the continuance of the war for my own particular interest; since my services had been so generously rewarded by her Majesty and her parliament; but I think myself obliged to make such an acknowledgment to her Majesty and my country, as to declare that I am always ready to serve them whenever duty may require, in obtaining an honourable and lasting peace. Upon the footing of these pretended preliminaries, you will have no such peace, and France will remain far too strong." The pathos and solemnity of this brief address produced a great sensation in the house, and a majority against the new government—a majority of 62 to 54, and obtained in spite of all the exertions of the court—told ministers that, for the present, they had nothing to hope for in the upper house.

A household quarrel threatened to shatter this government. As the Duke of Somerset had voted against them on

this occasion, and had strongly opposed them in the foul Sacheverell business, ministers insisted that he and the duchess should be deprived of their places at court. Anne assumed that she had the right to nominate her household, and was very angry. At the close of the debate in the lords, to which we have referred, as the queen was preparing to retire, the Duke of Shrewsbury asked her, whom she would choose to lead her out, whether himself, as lord chamberlain, or Lord Lindsay, who was hereditary great chamberlain. She peevishly and emphatically replied, "Neither," and gave her hand to the Duke of Somerset. Instantly, court and town were echoing with rumours of new changes: the queen was ashamed of her conduct to the most illustrious of her subjects; the Godolphins and Marlboroughs were coming back to power and favour. Mrs. Masham could not conceal her uneasiness; Lord Dartmouth, one of the intriguers, was in despair; St. John swore that the queen was false; and Oxford, the premier, though he affected to appear cheerful, was dismayed, and thinking of the Tower. Swift, who was one of his *amis damnees*, and another of Marlborough's enemies and slanderers, said to Harley, in his usual style of sarcastic irony, "If there is no remedy, your lordship will lose your head, but I shall only be hung, and so carry my body entire to the grave."* Whether the wit and thorough worldling had committed himself to such an extent as to merit the gallows, may be doubted, but his patron, Oxford, was certainly playing a game which, aforetime, had brought men to the block.

But Oxford, aided by his useful cousin, Masham, terrified the Queen with frightful pictures of the Duchess of Marlborough's vengeance, and of the tyranny the odious Whigs would exercise over her should they be restored to power; he desisted from requiring the removal of the Duchess of Somerset; he permitted the duke to remain some time longer in the household; he was sure of an

* Archdeacon Coxe. Swift's Journal to Stella.

overwhelming majority in the House of Commons; and, to make matters even for him and his party, he induced Anne to create suddenly twelve new peers.

And now for the charge of peculation, which, as a money matter, could be made to begin and end in the subservient House of Commons. Oxford and St. John had found out some foreign Jew army-contractors, who were ready, upon considerations given, to make depositions against the duke.

Having taken time to mature their plans, ministers struck their first great blow in the Commons on the 15th of December, when an order was passed for the commissioners of public accounts, to report their proceedings. Accordingly, on the 21st, Mr. Lockhart, a notorious Jacobite, presented the report. To give the charges more effect, they were clothed with an air of mystery; the depositions were ordered to be kept strictly private, and copies to be delivered by the clerk to none but members of the House. On the 27th of December, knowing the mischief that was brewing, Marlborough published in a newspaper, called the *Daily Courant*, a letter of complete justification, which he had written some time before. As this letter was evidently making a deep impression on the town, ministers, on the 29th, printed their criminatory charges in the same newspaper. This was the prelude to the duke's dismissal. On the same, or the following day, he appeared at court, and was treated with coldness and contempt. No one spoke to him.* Without waiting for farther investigation of charges, which were afterwards proved to be almost entirely false and unfounded, the Queen, put in motion by Oxford and Mrs. Masham, went to the cabinet council on the last day of the year, and ordered this entry to be made in the books:—

“Being informed that an information against the Duke of Marlborough was laid before the House of Commons, by the commissioners of the public accounts, her

* Swift's Journal to Stella.

Majesty thought fit to dismiss him from all his employments, that the matter might undergo an impartial investigation."

On the ensuing day, the 1st of January 1712, Anne communicated this resolution to the duke, in a note written in her own hand. We are left to guess what were the words of this note, for Marlborough, overcome by indignation, instantly threw it into the fire.* Here is the duke's answer:—

"Madam, I am very sensible of the honour your Majesty does me, in dismissing me from your service by a letter of your own hand, though I find by it that my enemies have been able to prevail with your Majesty to do it in the manner that is most injurious to me. And if their malice and inveteracy against me had not been more powerful with them than the consideration of your Majesty's honour and justice, they would not have influenced you to impute the occasion of my dismissal to a false and malicious insinuation contrived by themselves, and made public when there was no opportunity for me to give in my answer, which they must needs be conscious would fully detect the falsehood and malice of their aspersions, and not leave them that handle for bringing your Majesty to such extremities against me.

"But I am much more concerned at an expression in your Majesty's letter, which seems to complain of the treatment you had met with. I know not how to understand that word, nor what construction to make of it. I know I have always endeavoured to serve your Majesty, faithfully and zealously, through a great many undeserved mortifications. But if your Majesty does intend by that expression to find fault with my not coming to the cabinet council, I am very free to acknowledge, that my duty to your Majesty and country would not give me leave to

* Manuscript narrative of the Duchess, quoted by Coxe.

join in the council of a man, who, in my opinion, puts your Majesty upon all manner of extremities. And it is not my opinion only, but the opinion of all mankind, that the friendship of France must needs be destructive to your Majesty, there being in that court a root of enmity, irreconcilable to your Majesty's government, and the religion of these kingdoms. I wish your Majesty may never find the want of so faithful a servant as I have always endeavoured to approve myself to you. I am, with the greatest duty and submission," etc.*

The rapturous joy with which the French beheld the duke's disgrace, was at once a proof of his fidelity and zeal in the service of his country, and a tribute to his unrivalled and unapproachable merit. Louis XIV. wrote exultingly to his agent at London, "The dismissal of the Duke of Marlborough will do for us all that we desire!"

Out of doors, the report was industriously circulated that the duke had defrauded his country of more than half a million of pounds sterling; but, in the House of Commons, ministers, and the other enemies of the duke, and the witnesses they had suborned, did not dare take quite so high a flight in figures, but limited the amount to about 282,000*l*. The principal deposition was made by Sir Solomon Medina, who had had the contract for bread since the year 1706. This man affirmed that he had paid to the duke very large sums as a per-centage, and that his predecessor, Antonio Alvarez Machado, who appears never to have been examined, had done the same. The duke shewed that his per-centages and perquisites fell far short of the amount stated by this Solomon; that his receiving them was fully justified by the Queen's warrants; that all former commanders had received them; that he had acted according to precedent and established usage; and that the money so received had been all spent by him in conducting the war,

* Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough.

“more especially,” said he, “from time to time, for intelligence and secret service, and with such success that, next to the blessing of God and the bravery of the troops, we might in great measure attribute most of the advantages of the war in the Low Countries to the timely and good advice procured with the help of this money.” By the Queen’s warrants he was freed from the necessity of accounting for such sums; he could not expose and commit the numerous recipients of the money; no commander-in-chief could, even now, give in a detailed account of such disbursements: but it was notorious to the whole army, if not to all Europe, that Marlborough had annually expended immense sums for intelligence and secret services, and that his liberality was rewarded with that wonderfully correct intelligence which, with his own skill and sagacity, had kept him clear of every march in the dark, and of every blunder. The obscurest roads and most winding passages had all been lighted up to him and his army; but it had been indispensable to pay for the lights,—and, *le jeu valait bien les chandelles*. The system of per-centages and perquisites was a bad one, and ought to have been relinquished before now; but with this Marlborough had nothing to do—it was an established, legalised system, and he had no other source from which to draw the money so indispensable to the proper conduct of the war. Upon this ground, and upon the undeniable fact that the same allowances had been always paid to his predecessors, the duke so completely vindicated himself, that his enemies, malignant as they were, dared not pursue the investigation which the Queen, by her note in the council-book, had both promised and seemed to insist upon. It was enough for the Harleys and St. Johns that they had shelved Marlborough; that they could now manage the army and the precious treaty of peace in their own way.

In the month of January, only five days after the disgrace of the companion of his glory, Prince Eugene came

over to England, charged by the emperor with the most difficult of commissions. Eugene was to endeavour to replace Marlborough in his sovereign's good graces; to represent the fatal consequences which would attend the defection of England from the Grand Alliance; to urge on her Majesty that she was bound, not merely by honour, but also by interest, to continue the war till France should submit to the conditions laid down in 1706; and to propose a new plan for the prosecution of the war, in which the emperor engaged to take upon himself a larger proportion of the burthen than had ever been required from his brother and predecessor, Joseph. At first the English people received their truly illustrious guest with enthusiastic acclamations. "That prince's character," says Bishop Burnet, "was so justly high, that all people for some weeks pressed about the places where he was to be seen, to look on him." "I had the honour," adds the bishop, "to be admitted at several times to much discourse with him: his character is so universally known, that I will say nothing of him but from what appeared to myself. He has a most unaffected modesty, and does scarcely bear the acknowledgments that all the world pay him: he descends to an easy equality with those with whom he converses, and seems to assume nothing to himself while he reasons with others." For a time, both parties treated him with marked respect, and, in a manner, laid siege to him—the Tories to win him, the Whigs to retain him; but he destroyed the hopes of the former, and incensed the Queen, by passing the greater part of his time with the disgraced Marlborough: a circumstance, however honourable to himself, fatal to the objects of his mission.* The lord-treasurer Oxford, who, as Mr.

* On his first coming, Drummond, a creature of Secretary St. John, being deputed to receive the prince at Gravesend, intimated to him that he had better not see too much of the duke, nor do anything against the new government. To this man, Eugene nobly replied: "It is a mistake to suppose that I come to England with an intention to give the least

Harley, had extolled the duke above all warriors, ancient and modern, one day attempted to make court to the prince, whom he was entertaining, by styling him the first general in Europe; but Eugene replied, "If I am, it is to your lordship that I am indebted for it"—alluding to the recent dismissal of Marlborough, who was no longer a general. After feasting him with wonderful magnificence, and exhibiting to his eyes proofs of the wealth of the English aristocracy, and the profitableness of places and employments in England, the Tories turned against the prince; and began not only to abuse him, but to charge him indirectly with a share in many desperate plots and intrigues in favour of the Marlboroughs, and against the Queen and government. Every possible means was now used to blacken Marlborough, Godolphin, and the rest of the late ministers. A fresh cry of peculation was raised against that cabinet, as that which was most likely to obtain belief among the vulgar and excite the ignorant. A deficit of thirty-five millions was charged against them, as if they were responsible for all the unsettled accounts of all the governments since the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. The charge, when examined, dwindled, as usual, into nothing; but it had its effect for the moment, and that was all its contrivers looked for. From the time of our first having a constitutional government, there had been no prime minister so thoroughly honest and disinterested as Lord-Treasurer Godolphin. In those days, it was the custom, on the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's inauguration, to burn in effigy the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender. The effigies were arrested, and the shows stopped, upon a pretence that the Whigs intended to take advantage of the

disturbance to the ministry, but it is wholly inconsistent with my honour and temper to be wanting in respect to a friend, in his adverse fortune, for whom I always professed so much regard in the time of his prosperity."

holiday to excite an insurrection ;* and this ridiculous story has found its way into historical writings at home and abroad,—with the additional absurdity, that Marlborough was to put himself at the head of the mob, and that Prince Eugene was to support him. Another fable accused them of a design to fire the city, murder the ministers, seize and depose the Queen, and place the Elector of Hanover on the throne ! No limits were set to fabulous invention, malice, and insolence.

At this time, as the readers of our classical essayists are aware, there was a fashion, among dissipated young men, of rioting about the streets of London at night ; a mania which lasted for a time, and which, shorn of some of its brutalities, has been revived in a more civilized and orderly age. The “ Mohawks ” of the period were, in fact, nothing more than the “ Corinthians ” and “ Tom and Jerryists ” of our own day. But malice is inventive, and faction scruples at nothing : the ultra-Tories coupled the drunken brawlers and rioters with Prince Eugene and the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, and induced some unthinking, credulous people firmly to believe that the end of all these nocturnal scuffles would be, at the very least, the bloody assassination of good Queen Anne and all her cabinet ministers. Grub-street took up the theme ; and if Eugene had been familiar with our vernacular, his ear must have been vexed with some very bad and very indecent rhymes ; for some of the ballad-mongers made frouzy songs about his mother, Olympia Mancini, who was niece to Cardinal Mazarin, and not more immaculate than the majority of the princesses and high dames, her contemporaries ; and these ballads were

* This stopping of the vulgar show and cremation served two purposes favourable to the Tory ministry. Whatever she may have thought of two personages of the trio—the Pope and the Devil—Queen Anne certainly did not like the burning of the Pretender, who was her own half brother, and for whose succession to the British throne, she, with Harley, St. John, and many others, was undeniably plotting at this moment.

sung or bawled about the streets of London, by night and by day, unchecked by a government which had recently been expressing an exceeding great wrath at the abuses of the liberty of the press. But the libellers were not all hungry garreteers, nor did the satire and slander come all from the street kennels; Swift, Matthew Prior, and nearly all the professed wits and poets of the day, swelled the chorus, and the drawing-room gave credence to tales quite as monstrous as those that were swallowed by the saunterers in the streets. But that the wits should be all on the wrong side ought not to excite much surprise; if, generally, they have been esteemed indifferent critics even in their own art, they have usually been exceedingly bad critics in policy and war. In this respect, Marlborough always entertained a great contempt for them. In one of his letters, he tells Godolphin, that he cares nothing for their squibs, and that he shall be very happy if they continue to abuse him, and pass over in silence others who might be more sensitive than he. "When I was in England," says Voltaire, "I heard the Duke of Marlborough called a coward, and Mr. Pope a blockhead. Such is the blind violence of party!" The duke could well afford to smile at such an imputation; but when the grossest of insults was offered to him, to his face, in the most public manner, in the House of Peers, aged and *Christian* soldier as he was, he could not but resent it as a soldier. Earl Powlett, a courtier, recently made lord high steward, in vindicating the Duke of Ormond, who had succeeded to the command, for taking the field with Prince Eugene, while he was at the same time in secret communication with Villars, and had secret orders from the cabinet not to fight, said of him (Ormond), "that he did not resemble a certain general, who sent his troops to the slaughter to cause a great number of officers to be knocked on the head in a battle, or against stone walls, in order to fill his pockets by disposing of their commissions." Marlborough heard the atrocious insinuation in silence; but, as soon as

the House rose, he sent his friend, Lord Mohun, to invite my Lord Powlett to take the air in the country. The slanderer behaved just as a slanderer might have been expected to behave: he betrayed great uneasiness, and this was noticed by his wife, who must needs know what so troubled him; he told his wife that he was going to fight a duel with the duke, and his wife—as was intended—went away and told the Queen or Mrs. Masham. The immediate consequence was that Lord Dartmouth, now a secretary of state, placed two sentries at the Lord Powlett's door, and told his lordship that he was under arrest; and the Queen laid her orders upon Marlborough not to fight;—and so the affair ended.* “It is sufficient punishment for this slanderer, that he is remembered in history for this, and for this only; so easily may the coarsest and meanest mind purchase for itself a perpetuity of disgrace!” †

After stating that the court espoused the anti-Marlborough faction with great zeal, and *paid it well*, Bishop Burnet adds, “Upon this, many virulent writers (whether set on to it, or officiously studying to merit by it, did not appear), threw out, in many defamatory libels, a great deal of their malice against the Duke of Marlborough: they compared him to Catiline, to Crassus, and to Anthony, and studied to represent him as a robber of the nation, and as a public enemy. This gave an indignation to all who had a sense of gratitude, or a regard to justice. In one of these scurrilous papers, written on design to raise the rabble against him, one of the periods began thus, ‘He was perhaps *once* fortunate.’ I took occasion to let Prince Eugene see the spite of these writers, and mentioned this passage; upon which, he made this pleasant reflection, ‘That it was the greatest commendation could be given him, since he was

* Archdeacon Coxe. Shortly after this affair, Lord Mohun fought the remarkable duel with the Duke of Hamilton, in which both he and the duke were killed.

† Southey.

always successful ;' so this implied that in one single instance he might be fortunate, but that all his other successes were owing to his conduct. I, upon that, said, that single instance must be, then, his escaping out of the hands of the party that took him when he was sailing down the Meuse in the boat. But their ill-will rested not in defamation. . . Secret inquiries were made in order to the laying more load on the Duke of Marlborough, and to see whether posts in the army or in the guards were sold by him ; but nothing could be found. He had suffered a practice to go on, that had been begun in the late king's time, of letting officers sell their commissions, but he had never taken any part of the price to himself. Few thought that he had been so clear in that matter ; for it was the only thing in which now his enemies were confident that some discoveries would have been made to his prejudice ; so that the endeavours used to search into those matters, producing nothing, raised the reputation of his incorrupt administration more than all his well-wishers could have expected. Thus happy does sometimes the malice of an enemy prove ! In this whole transaction, he saw a new scene of ingratitude acted in a most impudent manner, when the man to whom the nation owed more than it had ever done in any age to any subject, or perhaps to any person whatever, was for some months pursued with so much malice. He bore it with silence and patience, with an exterior that seemed always calm and cheerful ; and though he prepared a full vindication of himself, yet he delayed publishing it until the nation should return to its senses, and be capable of examining these matters in a more impartial manner." *

But long, very long, was it ere the nation did return to its senses. The explosion of one falsehood led only to the fabrication of some other just as monstrous. *Fortes nascitur fortibus.*

On returning to the continent, Prince Eugene soon dis-

* History of his Own Time.

covered how little dependence was to be placed in the Duke of Ormond, our new commander-in-chief. The truce, which usually precedes or accompanies negotiations for peace, had not been bargained for on the present occasion by our incredible cabinet; and the French had never been more active in their warlike preparations than they were now, while the congress was sitting at Utrecht; but, in the month of May, the allied army, including the English troops and the Germans in English pay, amounted to 120,000 fighting men. Though sorely grieved at the removal of their old and adored chief, the English soldiers would have fought heartily under Eugene; but they had no faith in Ormond, whom Eugene despised as much in the field as he had revered Marlborough. The States-General would not trust our new commander-in-chief with the command of the Dutch troops, who were all transferred to Eugene, now assisted by King William's old friend and brave soldier Keppel, the Dutch Earl of Albemarle. Anticipating an attack by Villars, this veteran acted on the offensive, and burned and destroyed some French magazines near Arras. Eugene proposed immediately attacking Villars in his lines, or investing Que-noi if the lines should be found too strong. Ormond, who, on his arrival at the Hague, had declared to the States-General that his mistress intended a cordial co-operation with her allies, and especially with the Dutch, gave Eugene his consent to offensive operations. But in a few days,* when he was preparing to move with Eugene, Ormond received those secret and positive orders which have been already mentioned, and which amounted to this, — he was to avoid engaging in any siege or battle whatsoever, and to keep Prince Eugene in the dark as to these instructions.

Ormond then exchanged courteous letters with Marshal

* It appears that Ormond was himself duped by our government, and that he had left England in the belief that he was to fight.

Villars, and a series of disgraceful equivocations and deceptions ensued.

Leaving Ormond to carry on his correspondence with Secretary St. John, Eugene went and laid siege to Quesnoi. It appears that, in the first instance, Ormond reluctantly sent sixteen battalions of foreign mercenaries, who were in the joint pay of England and Holland, to assist the prince; but he afterwards assumed an attitude, as if he meant to cover the siege with the whole English army. Hereupon Villars coarsely reproached Ormond with perfidy. At the same moment Eugene, who wanted more active assistance, asked Ormond what he really meant to do. From a part of his painful dilemma, Ormond was, for the moment, delivered by St. John, who informed him that he must demand from Villars the town and port of Dunkirk, as the previous condition of a cessation of hostilities on the side of England. Dunkirk, it was said, was only to be held by the Queen of England as a pledge that France should perform all that she had promised in the still incomplete negotiations at Utrecht; and, on these terms, Villars and the other French officers were instructed by the court of Versailles to put the English troops in possession of Dunkirk.

The mask, which had been for some time flimsy and transparent, was now thrown off: Ormond, who had previously told Eugene that he knew no other difference between what was shameful and what dishonourable, than obedience to the orders of his queen, waited personally on the prince, and assured him that he could no longer cover the siege of Quesnoi, or do anything against the armies of Louis XIV. Eugene's indignation was increased by Ormond endeavouring to carry off with him, not merely the English troops, but also the foreigners who had been in our pay, but who were ready to take pay from any one of the allied powers, war being their trade, and their hatred to the French, provoked by past injuries, a violent and a lasting

passion. When Ormond's adjutant waited upon the brave Prince of Hesse Cassel, to persuade him to march off with the duke and the English, the prince said, "Go and tell your general that the Hessians will gladly march, if it is to fight the French!" Another foreign commander said, "We do not serve for pay, but for fame." None of the superior officers would listen to Ormond's base proposals, the baseness of which was augmented by their being made—at least in some instances—in an underhand, clandestine manner. The men were as true and as steady as their officers: though they had accepted pay from England, which their countries or governments had been too poor to afford, they had engaged in the war at the instance of the Emperor of Germany, and for the objects laid down in the Grand Alliance; it seemed to these men the height of dishonour to desert the old cause, and they one and all refused to abandon Prince Eugene, who, if left to himself, must be far too weak to cope with Villars. Ormond, who certainly had to perform the dirtiest work that was ever put upon an English general in the field, or upon an English gentleman anywhere else, then told them that their allowances would be stopped, and their arrears left unpaid. "God and the emperor will keep us from starving," said the faithful veterans.

"Up to this time," says a contemporary English historian, "these mercenaries had punctually obeyed orders; but now, when they were required to separate from the allied army, the men made answer to their own officers, that they would obey the Duke of Ormond in everything else but in this single point, in which the common safety and their own honour were in the utmost danger; that in this particular point they could not be prevailed with, by any promises or threatenings, to follow him, without the commands of their respective sovereigns; and they would rather perish than desert Prince Eugene and the allies."* Nearly

* Cunningham's Reign of Queen Anne.

all the little princes of Germany who had furnished these auxiliaries, afterwards approved of the conduct of their soldiers, calling God and man to witness that they had not hired out their troops for the sake of the pay only, but also out of regard to the common safety of Europe, and in observance of the duty they severally owed to the Germanic empire. Never before was English gold so foul in the eyes of the continent.

On the 16th of July, the very day on which Eugene nobly succeeded in reducing Quesnoi, Ormond quitted the allied camp at Cambrecis. The march of his troops presented a melancholy spectacle. As they had so often fought under the same banners with the brave fellows they were leaving, they deeply felt the pang of this inglorious separation. "As they marched off that day," says an honest English sergeant, who was with them, "both sides looked very dejectfully on each other, neither being permitted to speak to the other, to prevent reflections."* Ormond even feared that the auxiliaries, infuriated at his threat, would make him prisoner, and keep him as a pledge for the liquidation of their arrears. When, at the close of his first day's march, he caused the proclamation of the suspension of arms to be read aloud at the head of each of his regiments, he thought that the men would rejoice at the prospect of being relieved from toils and hardships, and restored to their country and homes; he was wofully deceived: the warriors of Marlborough were animated with the spirit of military and national honour. A burst of indignation accompanied this vile proof of national dishonour. Instead of huzzas and joyous acclamations, he heard nothing but a "general hiss and murmur throughout the camp." The men, in fact, were on the verge of mutiny. "The British soldiers," says Cunningham, "were so enraged at this unworthy conduct, that they were observed tearing their hair, and rending their clothes, with furious exclamations and

* Sergeant Milmer's Narrative.

execrable curses against the Duke of Ormond, as a stupid tool, and general of straw. The colonels, captains, and other brave officers, were so overwhelmed with vexation, that they sat apart in their tents, looking on the ground, through very shame, and for several days shrunk from the sight even of their fellow-soldiers; for it grieved them to the heart to submit to this disgrace, after so many splendid victories. Some left their colours to serve among the allies, and others afterwards withdrew; and whenever they recollected the Duke of Marlborough, and the late glorious times, their eyes were filled with tears.”*

With his dejected followers, Ormond continued the retreat. The allies, whom he had deserted, were furious. At Bouchain, Tournay, and Douay, the Dutch governors shut the gates in his face, and refused to open them for the passage of his troops. He ran the risk of being attacked on the scene of Marlborough's conquest and glory; and his humiliation was completed by a message from Villars, who told his grace that, if he were afraid of marching through Flanders, he and his army might come for safety into France! Had Louis XIV. been ten years younger, or had he been less crippled by the blows which Marlborough had struck, he would have broken off the negotiations at this juncture, would have attacked the disjointed forces of the allies, and would have reduced Ormond and his army of Englishmen to a capitulation, or an unconditional surrender. As it was, the French court refused to admit the English into Dunkirk, alleging that as Ormond was pledged to withdraw the auxiliaries in British pay as well as the native troops of Great Britain, and as those auxiliaries had not been withdrawn, the agreement about Dunkirk was nullified. Without shelter or support, dreading the resent-

* Reign of Queen Anne. The allies and men in our pay belonged to at least twenty different states, great and small. None followed Ormond, except four squadrons and one battalion of the Holstein subsidiaries, and a regiment of dragoons from the contingent of Liege.

ment of the allies, distrustful of the French, and unable even to rely on his own troops, Ormond had no resource to secure his retreat, except by forcibly seizing Ghent and Bruges. While he paused here, the old French king was alarmed by reports that public feeling in England would force on a rupture of the truce and a vigorous renewal of the war; and, as this must have been fatal to France, orders were sent to admit into Dunkirk a body of troops which had been detached from the coast of England. The possession of this seaport secured the retreat of Ormond, who lay a long time between it and Ghent while the negotiations were going on, and while the forsaken, overmatched Eugene was being repeatedly worsted by Marshal Villars. In one affair, brave old Albemarle, after witnessing the death, capture, or dispersion of the seventeen battalions he commanded, was taken prisoner, together with four lieutenant-generals, five colonels of regiments, and 300 other officers. Douay and Quesnoi were recaptured by the French, and Bouchain, the last great conquest of the hero of Blenheim, was also reduced. Towards the end of October, when these disasters were completed, Ormond embarked with his army and returned to England. He was received in a kind of triumph by ministers, who pretended to consider that he had acted more gloriously in skulking out of the war, than Marlborough had ever done in conducting it.

The secession of England left the continental powers little to do but to come to terms. The black treaty of Utrecht was signed in April 1713. But the imperial ministers would not put their names to it, and the war between France and the Emperor was prolonged another year, during which the heroic Eugene, left to himself, and far outnumbered, was defeated in Germany by Marshal Villars. At last, conferences were held at Rastadt, and there Eugene concluded such a peace as the conduct of England and the situation of affairs permitted.

This was the concluding scene of the great drama, which

had engaged the attention and called forth the energies of Europe during a period of twelve years. Through factious and despicable intrigues, the war failed to fix a proper and durable limit to the power or to the territories of France, however much that country was, for the time, weakened and brought to a sense of moderation. "But," says an accomplished and veteran soldier, "when viewed in the light in which it appears throughout the Duke of Marlborough's letters and despatches, the war will exhibit, on the part of the British general, who was the soul of the confederacy, a union of extraordinary abilities, of indefatigable activity, of unvarying steadfastness of purpose, and undeviating rectitude of conduct, which do him the highest honour; added to a series of brilliant achievements which have furnished some of the brightest pages to the military annals of his country."*

Some months before this impotent conclusion to all his glorious campaigns, the Duke of Marlborough had left England for the continent, in order to avoid daily insults and further persecution. But for his friend Godolphin, who was sinking into the grave, he would have taken his departure in the summer, or in fine weather, instead of lingering till the stormy and gloomy month of November. The ex-lord-treasurer expired at St. Albans, in a favourite house which the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough had at that place, and he died so poor as to leave scarcely money enough to pay his debts and the funeral charges. This broke the last tie which bound the duke to his ungrateful country. After Godolphin's funeral he prepared for his journey. In opposition to some of his colleagues, Oxford obtained from the queen the necessary passport, which was dated Windsor-castle, October 30, 1712, and countersigned with the ill-omened name of Bolingbroke. On the whole, both queen and government were rejoiced at the prospect of

* General Sir George Murray. Conclusion to the Marlborough Letters and Despatches.

his and the duchess's speedy departure. They felt they could do nothing more through their Jew contractors and hirelings in parliament; they were afraid of some sudden revulsion in public opinion; and they shrunk at the sight of one whom they had treated with so much injustice and ingratitude. They had left the splendid palace at Blenheim unfinished and unroofed; they had left the master of the works and the poor workmen unpaid for more than three years; and they were wearied by the applications of the duchess for the payment of the large sums of money that were owing on this account. The duke knew, and he might have exposed the plot that was in progress with the Pretender: at this time, the restoration of the Stuart line appeared, indeed, so possible, from the principles of Bolingbroke, and the favourite, now *Lady Masham*, and from the irreconcilable dislike with which the queen regarded the house of Hanover, that Marlborough thought it prudent, before leaving England, to invest 50,000*l.* in the Dutch funds, as a means of subsistence in case of this counter-revolution.

As the great commander had received the highest proofs of royal favour, both from his own sovereign and from foreign princes, he was fated also to have further experience of royal ingratitude. When he perceived that his disgrace in England was imminent, he asked for the government of the Spanish Netherlands, which had been repeatedly pressed upon him, and the emperor evaded a compliance with his request; the principality of Mindelheim, conferred on him after the battle of Blenheim, by which he had saved the house of Austria, was restored at the peace of Rastadt to Bavaria, and though an equivalent was promised, Marlborough never got it, nor did he obtain any compensation whatsoever. When Queen Anne was told that he was gone, she coolly said to the Duchess of Hamilton, "The Duke of Marlborough has acted wisely in going abroad."

After taking an affectionate leave of his family and wife, who remained for some time in England to settle his affairs,

the duke went to Dover on the 24th of November. The weather being unpropitious, and the wind contrary, he remained four days at the neighbouring seat of his friend, Sir Henry Furness. On Sunday, the 28th of November, he embarked as a private passenger on board the common packet. The castle and forts of Dover were silent; but the right-minded commander of the packet would fire a salute, with such guns as he had.

The duke bore his disgrace with a noble serenity, and appeared, in the eyes of right-minded, generous men, greater than he had ever been before.

“But now, when with diminish’d light,
And beams more tolerably bright,—
With less of grandeur and surprise,
Mild you descend to mortal eyes;
Your setting glories charm us more
Than all your dazzling pomp before;—
Your worth is better understood,
The hero more distinctly view’d,—
Glad we behold him not so great as good.

“True virtue’s amiable face
Improves when shaded by disgrace,—
A lively sense of conscious worth
Calls all her hidden beauties forth,
Darts through the gloom a lovely ray,
And by her own intrinsic light creates a nobler day.”*

But when the veteran hero reached Ostend, there was firing enough, and honours more than enough. Forts and

* Somerville, author of “The Chase.” Somerville was independent and high minded; thoroughly a generous English country gentleman. He never flattered Marlborough when at the height of his power, but in the days of his disgrace, when other writers who had so flattered were joining in the chorus of abuse, he celebrated the hero in two warmly eulogistic poems; one written on his being dismissed from all his employments, and the other written when he was going abroad as a private man, unhonoured and unnoticed. Dr. Johnson sneeringly said that Somerville wrote poetry like a gentleman. In a very different sense, it

shipping saluted his arrival; the whole garrison was drawn out under arms; and he was conducted by the governor and staff, and his brave and right-trusty general, Cadogan, through an immense concourse of shouting people, to the house of his friend, Captain Brown. Here he was sumptuously entertained, and here he received intelligence of the capture of Fort Knoque, the one brilliant success with which Prince Eugene had been enabled to dash the triumph of the boastful Villars. As the war was left, Knoque could be little more than nought, but the winning of it was the exploit of a dear friend, and the news of it delighted and cheered the heart of Marlborough.

On the following morning, the duke departed, under a triple discharge of artillery. On approaching Antwerp, he was met outside the walls by the governor, his old friend, the Marquis of Terracina, who, in the name of his imperial master, offered him all the honours usually paid to sovereigns. These were declined by the duke; but he could not prevent the discharge of the artillery, or suppress the acclamations of the people, who crowded on his path to gaze once more on the greatest soldier and most amiable man of the age. Wherever he went, the same honours, the same free offerings of respect, admiration, and affection, were paid to him. In vain did he attempt to avoid notice by turning aside, by taking out-of-the-way roads; men mounted on horseback to escort him and do him honour; and, on the most private roads, he was recognised by some and heartily saluted by all, for there was a magic in the name of "Malbrook," and the shouts were all the louder from the knowledge which the burghers and even the peasantry had of the infamous manner in which the aged hero had been treated in his own country. From Ostend to Maestricht,

were much to be wished that the poets who were Somerville's contemporaries had written like gentlemen. For Swift's virulence there is no accounting, except by supposing, with Southey, that his heart went mad before his head.

and from Maestricht to Aix-la-Chapelle, his progress was an ovation.

He continued some time *incognito* at Aix-la-Chapelle, being peculiarly careful in withdrawing, as much as possible, from public observation, and in giving no ground for that jealousy with which his numerous enemies tracked his steps, and watched his conduct. Suspecting that there was a conspiracy on foot to seize his person, he quitted Aix-la-Chapelle, and returned to Maestricht. Here he was soon joined by the duchess, who had never been abroad before, and who was received as the wife of Marlborough merited. From Maestricht they repaired together to Frankfort-on-the-Maine, whence they made several excursions. During his residence at Frankfort, he received regular intelligence of all that was doing or passing in England, and this intelligence increased his fears of the restoration of the Pretender and Papacy. In the month of July, shortly after the prorogation of parliament, he removed to Antwerp, where he was nearer home. He corresponded with Prince Eugene, with the ministers of the emperor, and the ministers of the Elector of Hanover, and with nearly all the eminent men who could in any way provide against the injuries inflicted on Europe by the treaty of Utrecht, or contribute to secure the Protestant succession in the person of the Elector George. Though in disgrace and in exile, he did far more than any other British statesman to smoothen the way to the accession of George I. His exertions became the greater in the early part of the year 1714, when he was assured that the health of Queen Anne was rapidly declining. His anxiety was incessant in the cause of liberty and religion. Knowing the daring spirit of Bolingbroke, and of many of his Jacobite followers, he was convinced that his country was menaced with a counter-revolution, which has usually been found to be the worst of all revolutions. He sent General Cadogan to make arrangements with General Stanhope, and the leaders

of the Hanoverian interest, for transporting troops to England, on the demise of the Queen, and for taking every precaution to frustrate the hopes of the Jacobites. He even engaged to use his endeavours in securing the fidelity of our troops stationed at Dunkirk (who would have followed him to the world's end), and to embark at their head, in support of the same good cause. With an ample knowledge of the purity and disinterestedness of the patriots of the day, he urged the Elector of Hanover not to spare his treasure in gaining adherents ; and, as that prince was poor, he offered to accommodate him with a loan of 20,000*l*. In gratitude, and in expectation of such future services as none but he could render, the electoral court sent a blank warrant, appointing him commander-in-chief of the army as soon as Anne should die.

As the summer approached, the intrigues in England thickened, and Marlborough began to see that his presence there would be indispensable. All his friends were impatient for his return. The dangerous Bolingbroke was labouring to supplant Oxford, as Oxford and he had supplanted Godolphin. By his duplicity in paying court successively to every party, Oxford had rendered himself contemptible to all ; by refusing that lady certain monies and pensions, he had even alienated his dear cousin, Lady Masham. For some time, at least, it had been evident that Oxford would not go the lengths of interfering with the Protestant succession as settled by Act of Parliament ; but it was now equally evident that Oxford must fall, and that Bolingbroke would be his successor—and Bolingbroke was known to have matured his plan for bringing in the Pretender. The Duchess of Marlborough was most eager to return home. She wrote to a friend that she would rather die in a cottage in England, than live in a palace abroad.

After some delays, the duke and duchess removed to Ostend, the most convenient port of embarkation. Minis-

ters, and the duke's other enemies at home, were, to use their own expression, "frightened out of their wits." They embarked on the 1st of August. The news of the Queen's health was at this time contradictory, and nobody on the continent knew or suspected that her Majesty was so near her last hour. Should she be living, with Bolingbroke for her prime-minister, Marlborough must expect a renewal of persecution and gross insult; but, on approaching the coast near Dover, in the evening of the 1st of August, the vessel was boarded by a messenger from Sir Thomas Frankland, postmaster-general, who conveyed the important tidings that the Queen had died at an early hour that morning, and that, in consequence of the energetic measures taken by Marlborough's friends and party, the elector George had been peacefully proclaimed in London.

The last days of the poor Queen were mournfully dramatic. An attempt was made to patch up a reconciliation between Oxford and Bolingbroke; but Lady Masham, who, though a weak woman, could be a very strong enemy, resolved that this should be defeated. Infuriated at his refusal to gratify her avarice, she told the falling minister and once loving cousin, to his face, that he had never done the Queen any good service, and that he was incapable of ever doing her any. Oxford retaliated,—“Madam, I have been abused by lies and misrepresentations; but I will leave some people as low as I found them!” This passed in the Queen's cabinet, and in her Majesty's presence; and the altercation between the titled waiting-woman and the lord-treasurer is said to have lasted till two hours after midnight. The end was, that Anne demanded the white staff, and Oxford was left low himself. The Queen, suffering before, retired in a state of dreadful agitation; the violent, disgraceful scene had given her her deathblow. It was enacted on Tuesday the 27th of July. From this moment Bolingbroke was considered as virtually the prime-minister. Though not duly authorized so to do, he forthwith proceeded to form

an entirely new and thoroughly Jacobite cabinet. He reserved for himself the seals as secretary of state, with the sole management of the foreign correspondence. Sir William Windham was to preside at the treasury; the Earl of Mar was to manage the affairs of Scotland; the Duke of Ormond was to be commander-in-chief; Atterbury, bishop of Rochester, was to hold the privy seal, &c.* Bolingbroke now told the French agents that the interests of the Pretender were "safe."

On the 30th of July, only three days after the stormy scene in her cabinet, the Queen's gout mounted to her brain, and she had an apoplectic fit. She had told her physicians that she should never recover; and she now sank into a stupor. There was a display of grief both real and affected; but the funds rose considerably as soon as it was known in the city that she was dying. The most intelligent part of the nation had become convinced that nothing was so likely to endanger property, internal peace, and the constitution, as a prolongation of the royal life, and of the ministry of the plotting insidious man upon whom she had thrown herself.

On the other side, Bolingbroke, Ormond, and the rest of that party, who had been rather named to office than put in possession of it—so rapid was the course of events—were bewildered and all but stupified at this sudden blow. They met in council at Kensington-palace, in a room not far from that where the Queen lay dying. "Let her live but six weeks longer," said Bolingbroke, "and all will go well for us." It was not to be.

They were presently thrown into consternation by the

* Archdeacon Coxe has well remarked, that there can be no doubt as to the character of the members of this projected administration. Three of them, including Bolingbroke, soon afterwards followed the Pretender; Atterbury, who offered to perform the bold freak of proclaiming the Pretender at Charing Cross, was attainted; and Sir William Windham was deep in the rebellion schemes of 1715.

arrival of the Dukes of Argyle and Somerset, who said that, understanding her Majesty's danger, they had hastened to give their advice, though not summoned to the council. The Duke of Shrewsbury, who was now firm for the Hanoverian succession, rose up and thanked them for their unexpected attendance. Somerset and Argyle then took their seats at the council board, insisted on examining the physicians, and, upon their report, urged that it should be proposed to the Queen that the post of lord-treasurer should be instantly filled up, as at such a moment it was essential to have a recognised prime-minister ; and they further insisted that the Duke of Shrewsbury should be at once recommended to her Majesty, as the nobleman most fit to manage affairs at that crisis, and to secure the succession as fixed by Parliament. Bolingbroke thus saw his grand scheme vanish into thin air, like an unsubstantial palace at the touch of the enchanter ; but he said nothing, did nothing, remaining in amaze like one under a spell ; and he followed Shrewsbury and the other lords to the deathbed side, where the recommendation of the council was intimated in a discourse which the sufferer, in all probability, did not understand. A sign or a nod from Anne was, however, interpreted as a sufficient assent, and as a sufficient warrant for a most momentous change—a change which involved the interests of millions. Thus was Shrewsbury, already lord-lieutenant of Ireland and lord-chamberlain, made lord-treasurer and prime-minister, and from this moment the deciding card was in his hand.

The Duke of Argyle, a man of ability and a man of action, moved that every privy councillor whatsoever, who happened to be in London or in the neighbourhood, should be immediately summoned to attend. The council chamber was soon crowded by Whig lords and notabilities who had not been near the court for a long time. If Bolingbroke and his coadjutors were bewildered before, they were now crushed and ridden over. The Whig lords ordered four

regiments up to London, recalled seven battalions from Dunkirk, laid an embargo on all the sea-ports, issued instructions for the immediate equipment of a good strong fleet, and took other measures to secure the throne to the House of Hanover, and defeat any attempt that might be made by France and the Pretender. Indeed, before the result of the visit of Argyle to the council chamber was known, General Stanhope and other military friends of the Duke of Marlborough, had concerted measures to the same end, and had made sure of the troops. Stanhope had even formed a plan for seizing the Tower of London, and clapping up in it all the most dangerous Jacobite leaders.

On the day after the appointment of the Duke of Shrewsbury, while Anne was in a lethargy, and the physicians were expecting every moment to be her last, the council sent their orders to the heralds-at-arms, and to a troop of the life-guards, to be in readiness, at any instant, to proclaim the rightful successor, George I.; they hurried off Mr. Craggs to Hanover to hasten the journey of the elector, who was requested to repair to the coast of Holland, where the English fleet would be ready to receive him; and they despatched letters to remind the States-General that they had by treaty guaranteed the succession of the House of Hanover. All this, and much more, was done on the 31st of July, and on the following morning Anne, who had not recovered sufficiently from her stupor, either to sign her will or to take the sacrament, expired in the 50th year of her age and 13th of her reign.

The still bewildered Bolingbroke wrote to Swift,—“The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the Queen died on Sunday! What a world is this, and how does fortune banter us!”

On landing at Dover, the Duke of Marlborough received an enthusiastic welcome: salutes were no longer grudged him; the thunder of artillery resounded on every side. He was escorted by the mayor and corporation, and nearly

all the population of Dover, to the hospitable mansion of his friend, Sir Henry Furness, from which he had taken his departure for his voluntary exile.

On the following day, he travelled towards the capital, and passed the night at the pleasant village of Sittingbourne. His entry into London, on the 3rd of August, was like a triumph. He had purposed to enter with his usual privacy; but this was prevented by the affectionate zeal of his friends who met him in the suburbs. The air resounded with shouts of "Long live King George! Long live the Duke of Marlborough!" Sir Charles Coxe, member for Southwark, at the head of 200 gentlemen on horseback, formed his guard of honour; and, as he advanced, the procession was joined by his family and friends, and a long train of carriages. With this escort he passed through the city, under Temple-bar, and on to his house in Pall-mall, preceded by a volunteer company of the city grenadiers, who took their leave by firing a volley.

On the 5th of August, the duke was visited by most of the foreign ministers, and many of the nobility, gentry, and officers of the army; and, having been sworn of the Privy Council by the lords justices, he appeared in the House of Lords, which (since the Queen's death) then first met for the transaction of business. He took the oaths of allegiance to King George, and voted on the loyal address to his Majesty. The duke then retired into the country to pass a happy time with his daughters and his grandchildren.

"Nor foreign force, nor factious rage,—
Nor envy, nor devouring age,
Your lasting glory shall impair,—
Time shall mysterious truths declare,
And works of darkness shall disclose;
This blessing is reserv'd for you,
T' outlive the trophies to your merit due,
And malice of your foes.

If glorious actions, in a glorious cause,—
If valour, negligent of praise,
Deserving, yet retiring from applause,
In generous minds can great ideas raise :
If Europe sav'd, and liberty restor'd,
By steady conduct and a prosperous sword,
Can claim in free-born souls a just esteem,—
Britain's victorious chief shall be
Rever'd by late posterity,—
The hero's pattern, and the poet's theme.*

The new king, though he duly appreciated the services of Marlborough, and respected him proportionately, could never forgive him for having left him on the Rhine in 1708, without communicating the intended operations of that campaign of conquest and glory, in which the great battle of Oudenarde had been fought, and Brabant and Flanders recovered. He restored the duke to all his honours and offices, but did not avail himself of his advice to the extent which he ought to have done, as well for his own sake as for the good of the country. It was believed, and it is still thought, that Marlborough might have disarmed the animosities of parties, and have constituted a wise, moderate government, which would have brought the best men into office, and have obviated not a few of the factions and calamities which afterwards happened. It appears, however, that he was consulted in every serious emergency; that he advised the ministry how to meet the invasion of the Pretender in 1715; and shewed how and where the rebels would be defeated on their march into Lancashire. In innumerable other matters, his opinions must have influenced many of the public men of the day, with whom he maintained a frequent and most friendly intercourse. That suspicions were now and then revived, and clamours raised against him, or rather against the

* Somerville.

duchess, proved only that the malice of some people and the credulity of others are incurable.

When history or biography is pressed into service merely "to point a moral," violence is sometimes done to chronology and to facts. Dr. Johnson, in his affecting and excellent poem, "The Vanity of Human Wishes," has been the means of perpetuating an error in regard to the Duke of Marlborough. Everybody remembers and quotes the celebrated couplet ;* and, although the fact was disproved by Archdeacon Coxe, thirty-two years ago, and by Southey, twenty-nine years ago, nearly everybody still believes that many of the last years of Marlborough were passed in a miserable state of drivelling dotage. It is true that, in the year 1716, he had two paralytic seizures, but he rapidly recovered both his strength and faculties, except that he had afterwards some difficulty in articulating certain words. For nearly eight years, counting from his return, or the death of Queen Anne, until within six months of his own demise, he continued to attend parliament, and to perform the business of his offices as captain-general and master of the ordnance. It was by the king's particular desire that he retained these important offices, in the filling of which he never betrayed any incapacity. When not kept in London by his parliamentary and official duties, he passed his time in happy, honoured retirement in the country, among his children and grandchildren, and dearest friends. But this retirement, which, with such adjuncts, could be no moping solitude, was, moreover, frequently enlivened by festivals and entertainments. The aged warrior could quietly share in the amusements of the young and gay, and amuse himself with their "Private Theatricals" at Blenheim, in which the junior branches of his own family bore a part. It is recorded that, with one of their plays, (Dryden's "All for Love") the old duke was so pleased

* "From Marlboro's eyes the tears of dotage flow,
And Swift expires a driveller and a show."

that they were made to perform it three several times; and that, to the gentleman who played the part of Mark Anthony, he lent the splendid sword which had been presented to him by the emperor. He was extremely attentive to the education of his grand-daughters, and occasionally witnessed, with parental fondness, their lessons in dancing and music. He delighted in his gardens and grounds—

“To him the deep recess of dusky groves,
Or forest, where the deer securely roves;
The fall of waters, and the song of birds,
And hills that echo to the distant herds,
Are luxuries exceeding all the glare
The world can boast, and her chief favourites share.”*

He knew all his neighbours, of whatsoever rank, and could amuse himself, and make them feel honoured and happy, by his familiar, friendly conversation. The traditions left of him in the little town of Woodstock, and all that countryside, were pleasing and amiable. A few generations may carry one a long way back up the stream of time. We have conversed in our boyhood with those whose fathers had conversed with the duke, and who had their traditions from other humble contemporaries. One of their stories was, that Marlborough, like the immortal Burke, at a later period, was a very knowing and excellent farmer. In the winter evenings, the duke could amuse himself with cards, and small stakes; he played at ombre, basset, and piquet, and sometimes, with his grandchildren, even at commerce; but his favourite game was whist. We do not see the serious game of chess mentioned among his recreations. It appears that he occasionally paid visits to his old friends at their own houses. Among these, none seems to have been more cherished than his brave General Withers,

. “the friend of human kind,
More visited than either park or hall,
Withers the good, and with him ever join’d
Facetious Disney.”†

* Cowper—Retirement.

† Gay.

After the conclusion of the war, Withers had taken a pleasant villa on Blackheath, just behind Greenwich. He was an early friend of Pope, who celebrated his philanthropy and hospitality. Colonel Disney, another veteran, celebrated for his wit or humour, was either a constant inmate of the villa, or a very near neighbour. The amiable, absent-minded, most humorous Gay, must have been a frequent visitor. In truth, this suburban villa of the brave, kind-hearted old soldier seems to have been the resort of some of the pleasantest people, and best literary men of the period. We know that Marlborough and the duchess were there, for some time, in the year 1718. Pope, Gay, and other wits, were in the house at the time, or shortly after them. This was not the sort of society to be kept by a dotard. The duke also visited the Prince and Princess of Wales, at Richmond.

He made his last appearance in the House of Lords on the 27th of November 1721. He passed the winter in London, in his usual manner, and, in the month of May, removed to Windsor-lodge. Towards the beginning of June 1722, he had a return of his malady, which would not yield to the customary remedies. He lay several days, fully sensible of his approaching dissolution, but in perfect possession of his senses, calm, composed, religiously resigned, and without pain. On the 16th of June, at four o'clock in the morning, as the bright sun was rising over the river, hills, and forest, he died in the arms of his beloved wife, in the 72nd year of his age.

His body, being embalmed, was removed from Windsor to Marlborough-house, Pall-mall, where it lay in state. The procession to Westminster Abbey, and the funeral ceremonies therein, were royally magnificent, the expenses being borne not by the court or country, but by the wealthy and devoted widow. The grave was opened at the east end of the tomb of Henry VII. and when the coffin was lowered into it, the awful ceremony was concluded by Garter King

of Arms, who, standing on the verge of the grave, recited the various titles and honours of the deceased, all ending in—"Thus it has pleased Almighty God, to take out of this transitory world, into His mercy, the most high, mighty, and noble prince, John, Duke of Marlborough."

The duchess, the great-grandmother, without a gray hair, was sixty-two years old when she was thus left a widow. She was still beautiful as well as rich. Proposals of marriage were successively made to her by Lord Coningsby, and by the Duke of Somerset. To the duke she replied that such a proposal was unsuitable to her time of life, but that, if she were thirty instead of being three-score, she would not permit even the emperor of the world to succeed in that heart which had been devoted to John, Duke of Marlborough.* She survived her illustrious husband two-and-twenty years, dying in 1744, at the age of eighty-four. She lived to see the magnificent pile of Blenheim—so often interrupted by government spite or parsimony—completed according to the duke's directions. Besides immense sums of money he had spent on the palace during his lifetime, he had left, at his death, 50,000*l.* to be expended by equal instalments, in five years, for its completion, under the sole control of his widow. Queen Anne had promised to build this proud monument of national glory at her own expense: if Marlborough had not caused it to be finished, at his expense, it would have remained that most mournful of all ruins (the ruins of a building never completed), and a striking monument of the fickleness of Anne and of the meanness of her ministers.†

* This made no breach of friendship between the duchess and the Duke of Somerset; he afterwards solicited her advice in the choice of a wife, and, at her recommendation, married Lady Charlotte Finch.

† Coxe. Sonthey. In the copies of Marlborough Papers, deposited by Archdeacon Coxe in the library of the British Museum, there are numerous letters from the duchess, Sir John Vanbrugh, and others, concerning the buildings at Blenheim. Many times the duchess declared that the place would never be finished.

The solicitude of the high-minded widow for the fame and glory of her great consort, never ceased or diminished until she joined him in the grave. The account of her own conduct at court, which we have so often quoted, was intended to be rather a defence of the duke than of herself. In the writing of it she was assisted by Hooke, the well-known historian of Rome. She retained other literary men to assist her in other works, all written with the same object, and for the most part published anonymously. If she betrayed too much querulousness, and did not always take the best means for effecting her end, we cannot but admire the constancy of her purpose, and the vivacity of her reverence and affection, which survived the depressing, chilling influences of fourscore years. She would have Marlborough appear to the world as she knew him to have been. To this task she devoted her life. Those who had been the steady friends of her husband—who had served him on any occasion, no matter what their rank or condition, were cherished by her as personal friends; and, if they wanted the aid which her wealth could furnish, that aid was never denied. But woe to those—if ever they came within the range of her influence—who had betrayed, or aspersed or spoken slightly of “my lord.” In no matters, perhaps, was forgiveness her distinguishing virtue; but certainly these persons she *never* forgave. Here, indeed, the duchess

“Shines in exposing knaves and painting fools.”

She collected and compiled numerous materials for the life of the duke, and consigned the task to Glover and Mallet, who were political writers in prose as well as popular poets. She entrusted to their care her valuable papers;* and assigned, by will, the sum of 1,000*l.* for a “History of the Duke of Marlborough,” but clogged the bequest with

* It appears that the papers, with an eye to the composition of a Biography, had been previously in the hands of Lord Molesworth and Sir Richard Steele. Hooke, the historian, must also have seen them.

two conditions:—1. That the work should be approved by her executors; 2. *That it should not contain a single line of verse.*

It is supposed that Glover very early renounced his share of work and profit; and Mallet, though he continued to talk of performing the task, almost as long as he lived, never made the least progress in it. On the death of Mallet, in 1765, the papers were restored to the family; and being, with others of no less value, deposited at Blenheim, were regularly arranged by order of the then duke. It was well that they should have been reserved for the use of Archdeacon Coxe, in our own day, as neither Glover nor Mallet could have made such good use of them.

Except in the valuable publication of Sir George Murray, no important materials have been added, and no new reliable light thrown upon the life, campaigns, and diplomacy of our great warrior and statesman, since Coxe wrote and published. Though too voluminous for the general reader, and unsuited to the young, or for a school-book (which we humbly hope ours to be), the work of the industrious and conscientious archdeacon will always remain a treasure in our libraries, and an invaluable book of reference. By that work Marlborough's character was first laid open to the world, without reserve, from the evidence of the most unquestionable documents.

The archdeacon did not attempt to paint Marlborough as—

“The faultless monster which the world ne'er saw.”

He acknowledges the political and other faults of his earlier life. He frankly allows the existence of that parsimony which is kept alive by many anecdotes, not all of the most authentic sort, and which is always mentioned by cavillers as one of the blemishes on the duke's greatness. The repentant Bolingbroke, long after Marlborough's death, expressed himself in a far better spirit. Discussing the cha-

racter of the duke at a dinner party, the politicians and wits present dwelt upon the duke's love of money. "Well," said Bolingbroke, "he was so great a man, that I had forgotten he ever had that weakness." But the weakness or fault has been overrated. Frugality had been with him a *necessary* virtue at the commencement of his career, and was rendered still more so by his early marriage with a beautiful, high-spirited, but poor woman. As in innumerable other cases, including those of highly distinguished and most excellent men, the habit continued after the necessity had ceased. Spence, quoting Pope as his authority, tells the following story:—"One day as the duke was looking over some papers in his scrutoire with Lord Cadogan, he opened one of the little drawers, took out a green purse, and turned some broad pieces out of it, and after viewing them for some time with a satisfaction that appeared very visible in his face,—'Cadogan,' says he, 'observe these pieces well; they deserve to be observed. There are just forty of them; 'tis the very first sum I ever got in my life, and I have kept it always unbroken from that very time to this day.'"^{*} This anecdote confirms the accounts of Marlborough's early poverty and resolute economy, without in the least putting on him the stamp of confirmed avarice. He never was a miser; for he never spared when it was proper that he should spend. In his loans to government, in his outlays for the soldiery, in his donations to those who had rendered him service, in his assistance to literary men, in his buildings and improvements, and in transactions of a public nature, no man was more munificent. To assist Mallet, the poet, in his greatest distresses, he allowed him a pension for several years. He could be generous to foes as well as to friends: after the battle of Malplaquet he divided among the French officers, his prisoners, all the money that he had with him, in order that they might have the comforts their condition required. It is quite

^{*} Spence's Anecdotes of Books and Men.

certain that the English soldiers would not have loved a penurious general, and it is equally certain that no general ever more entirely possessed the love, as well as confidence, of his men. A Chelsea pensioner, at the election of 1737, was threatened with the loss of his pension if he would not vote for Lord Vere, the government candidate at Windsor. The poor man replied, "I will venture starving rather than it shall be said, that I vote against the Duke of Marlborough's grandson, after having followed his grandfather so many hundred leagues." This went to the heart of the duchess, who is herself the relater of the anecdote, and who adds, "I do not know whether they have taken away his pension, but I hope they will: for I have sent him word, if they do take it away, I will settle the same upon him for his life." Instances of his generosity, and of his tender, affectionate care of his soldiers are constantly met with in the duke's letters and despatches; and it is in them that we best see the entire confidence the men had in him, and he in the men. "They will do everything that I command," "they never raise difficulties," "the men never complain of their hardships if I am with them," "they are always ready, and cheerful in battle or in the trenches," these are expressions constantly dropping from his pen.

Napoleon Bonaparte was not the first popular commander that bore the name of "corporal." As a term of endearment Marlborough's soldiers bestowed upon him the name of 'Corporal John.' When, as sometimes happened, they could not comprehend the manœuvres in which they were engaged, or the hazards to which they were exposed, they were accustomed to say, "Never mind. If we are in a scrape, Corporal John will be sure to get us out of it."

He was never known to give his men unnecessary disturbance, toil, or trouble, as less competent and less considerate commanders frequently did. "To go on at that rate," says Corporal Trim (no mean authority), "will harass a regiment all to pieces, which a good command-

ing officer, who loves his men, will never do, if he can help it."

No indecent or coarse word was ever heard to come from Marlborough's lips, and he checked or resented such language in others. This, with his scrupulous attention to the duties of religion, and his prevalent example in other matters, gradually produced a wonderful effect in his camp, which resembled a quiet and well-governed city. One who served under him says, "Cursing and swearing were seldom heard among the officers, and the poor soldiers, many of them the refuse and dregs of the nation, became, in one or two campaigns, civil, sensible, and clean, and had an air and spirit above the vulgar." At the end of the war his was, indeed, an army of gentlemen.

In our Memoir of the Duke of Wellington, we have dwelt upon the very many strong points of resemblance between our living chief and his great predecessor, and the comparison has been inevitably renewed in various passages of the present little volume. A studied or a forced parallel, in the manner of Plutarch, is not needed. The prominent qualities of the two great minds appear, indeed, to be almost identical. Such, at least, is the impression left on our own mind, after another and careful perusal of the Duke of Marlborough's despatches.

"It is a characteristic," says Adam Smith, "almost peculiar to the great Duke of Marlborough, that ten years of such uninterrupted and such splendid successes as scarce any other general could boast of, never betrayed him into a single rash action, scarce into a single rash word or expression. The same temper and coolness and self-command cannot, I think, be ascribed to any other great warrior of later times." * They could not, in fact, be ascribed to any commander, until Wellington commenced his military career at Assaye, and terminated it at Waterloo.

Making the *amende honorable* when—as far as the illus-

* Moral Sentiments.

trious object of it was concerned—it was too late, his once inveterate enemy, St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, penned these deliberate and eloquent lines :—

“ By his (King William's) death, the Duke of Marlborough was raised to the head of the army, and, indeed, of the confederacy, where he, a private man, a subject, obtained, by merit and by management, a more deciding influence than high birth, confirmed authority, and even the crown of Great Britain had given to King William. Not only all the parts of that vast machine, the grand alliance, were kept more compact and entire, but a more rapid and vigorous motion was given to the whole ; and, instead of languishing or disastrous campaigns, we saw every scene of the war full of action. All those wherein he appeared, and many of those wherein he was not then an actor, but abettor, however, of their action, were crowned with the most triumphant success. I take, with pleasure, this opportunity of doing justice to that great man, whose faults I knew, and whose virtues I admired ; and whose memory, as the greatest general and the greatest minister that our country or any other has produced, I honour.”*

As we ended our Memoir of Wellington with a passage from the best and most thoroughly English-hearted of our modern prose writers, we will wind up this condensed story of Marlborough with an equally admirable passage from the same pen.

“ It is no light wrong to the dead that an honourable name should thus have been defamed : it is no light injury to the living. What ingenuous mind is there that has not felt sorrow and humiliation for the obliquity and meanness by which the character of Marlborough has, hitherto, seemed to be degraded ? Who is there that has not felt that whatever derogated from the admiration which he would otherwise have merited, was to be regretted as a national evil ?—for the reputation of such men as Marlborough, as Nelson

* Letters on the Study of History.

(and let us be allowed to add the only name worthy to be classed with them), as Wellington, belong to their country. In such names, nations have much of their permanent glory, and no small part of their strength: the slanderer, therefore, who detracts from their fame, and asperses their memory, commits a moral treason, and, as far as he succeeds, inflicts a wound upon his native land; but sooner or later truth prevails, and his infamy then is in proportion to the merit which he has calumniated.”*

* Southey.

THE END.

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